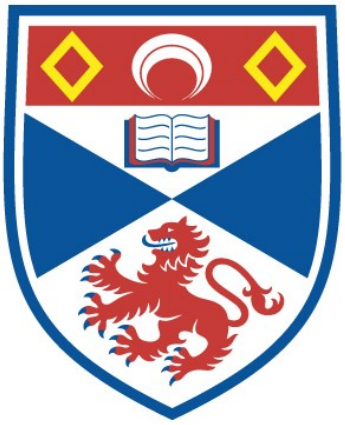
NATALIA GONCHAROVA AND MIKHAIL LARIONOV'S NEO-PRIMITIVIST DEPICTIONS OF SOCIAL OUTCASTS IN THEIR THEMATIC SERIES OF 1907-14

Cheryl Ann Kramer

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



2000

Natalia Goncharova and Mikhail Larionov's Neo-primitivist Depictions of Social Outcasts in their Thematic Series of 1907–14

by
Cheryl Ann Kramer

Submitted to the
University of St. Andrews
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
On 24 November 1999

Volume I

(i) I, Cheryl Ann Kramer, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 83,319 words in length exclusive of declarations, table of contents and illustration lists, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous applications for a higher degree.

Date: 24 November 1999 Signature of candidate:

(ii) I was admitted as a research student in October, 1993 and as a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in October, 1994; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St. Andrews between 1993 and 1999.

Date: 24 November 1999 Signature of candidate:

(iii) I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy in Art History in the University of St. Andrews and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

Date: 20 January 2000 Signature of supervisor:

In submitting this thesis to the University of St. Andrews I wish access to it to be subject to the following conditions:

For a period of three years from the date of submission the thesis shall be withheld from use.

I understand, however, that the title and abstract of the thesis will be published during this period of restricted access; and that after the expiry of this period the thesis will be made available for use in accordance with the regulations of the University Library for the time being in force, subject to any copyright the work not being affected thereby, and a copy of the work may be made and supplied to any bona fide library or research worker.

Date: 24 November 1999 Signature of candidate:

Abstract

This study addresses the contemporary political and social issues raised by the subject matter of Natalia Sergeevna Goncharova (1881–1962) and Mikhail Fedorovich Larionov's (1881–1964) Neo-primitivist series of 1907–14. The ideological implications of the themes are explored, and it is argued that their development of anti-heroes challenged the mores celebrated by the status quo within Tsarist Russia.

Chapter I investigates the prevailing ideological climate and provides a cultural and political contextual framework for the development of Neo-primitivism and the choice of subject matter. The subsequent chapters focus upon specific thematic cycles. Chapter II argues that Larionov and Goncharova's paintings on low-life and hooligan subject matter are anti-social works that undermine the affectations of the civilized behaviour advanced by polite, urban society. Chapter III examines Larionov's prostitute paintings and argues that the artist's unorthodox treatment of the nude challenged the viewer's conception of the classical nude, prostitution and sexuality, as well as the role of women within the Russian patriarchy. Chapter IV argues that the cycle of paintings Goncharova devoted to labouring peasants highlights the traditional way of rural life as a call for the regeneration of contemporary society. Chapter V explores Larionov's soldier series and argues that the artist debased traditionally revered sources to produce coarse paintings that mock the soldier as a symbol of patriotism, thereby satirizing the Tsarist regime. Chapter VI argues that Goncharova's

body of work on Jewish themes incorporate both anti-establishment and anti-assimilation statements.

This choice of themes countered established values, and this was enhanced by their Neo-primitivist style. The artists confronted the viewer with images grounded upon various contradictions that call the seemingly disparate subject matter, the means of representation and the symbolism into question. The anti-establishment ethos that underpins these works is central to the understanding of Goncharova and Larionov's series of 1907–14.

Acknowledgments

There are many people who have proved instrumental in the realization of this study, and I would like to thank John E. Bowlt who provided inspiration in my first formal seminar on Russian Modernism; my supervisor Christina Lodder who advised and encouraged me through the many stages of production of this thesis, as well as generously providing detailed commentary and editorial advice on numerous drafts; Jeremy Howard who leant support throughout; and Anthony Parton who enthusiastically discussed Larionov and Goncharova with me.

Research in Russia would not have been possible without three awards from the University of St. Andrews: the first from the Russell Trust, issued by the Post-Graduate Office; the second and third from the Gapper Trust, issued by the School of Art History. I would also like to thank the staff at RGALI [formerly TsGALI], the archives of Tretiakov Gallery, the Archives of the Russian Museum, the Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library and the Lenin Public Library. Closer to home, I would like to thank the staff in the Inter-Library Loan Department at the University of St. Andrews Library for their perseverance; and Jim Fotheringham, Margaret Hall and Dawn Waddell, the Secretaries at the School of Art History, for their continued assistance.

I would also like to thank Rob Eastaway, Joanna Gardner-Huggett, John Hanson, Sasha Hippisley-Gatherum, Karen Johnson, Grisha Kenworthy, Kelly Lamare and C.K., Steve Laurence, Debrorah Riley and Julie Wolf for their help and support throughout the entire process. Lilian

Zirpolo and Irene Kale were committed to the realization of this project and I cannot thank them enough for their assistance. I would also like to extend special thanks to Richard Hamill who was there with me for so many of the ups and downs along the way. Finally, I would like to thank my parents for their continued belief and support throughout my education.

Table of Contents

Volume I

List of Illustrations

16. Anonymous, *The Virgin Hodegetria of Georgia*, first half of the sixteenth century, oil and gesso on board, 118.4 x 91.3 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum.

17. Mikhail Larionov, *The Gypsy*, 1909, oil on canvas, 95 x 81 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection.

18. Novgorod School, *Madonna Temderness*, end of fourteenth–beginning of fifteenth century, tempera on panel, 53 x 41 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

19. Alexei Venetsianov, *Harvesting: Summer*, before 1827, oil on canvas, 60 x 48.3 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

20. Mikhail Larionov, *Country Bathers*, 1910, oil on canvas, 89 x 109 cm, Krasnodar, Lunacharskii Art Museum.

21. Mikhail Larionov, *The Baker*, 1909, oil on canvas, 107 x 102 cm, Lugano, Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection.

22. Mikhail Larionov, *Loaves*, 1910, oil on canvas, 102 x 84 cm, Paris, Private Collection.

23. Anonymous, *Bread and Grocery Shop Sign*, first quarter of the twentieth century, oil on burnished iron, 152 x 112 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

24. Ilia Mashkov, *Loaves*, 1912, oil on canvas, 105 x 133 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

25. Mikhail Larionov, *Kneading Dough*, 1909, oil on canvas, 55 x 70 cm, Cologne, Galerie Gmurzyrisk.

26. Anonymous, *Preparing Flour, Baking*, sixteenth century. Illustrated in R.E.F. Smith and David Christian, *Bread and Salt: A Social and Economic History of Food and Drink in Russia* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 17.

27. Anonymous, *The Pancake Vendor*, 1760s, woodcut, 35.8 x 29.6 cm, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

28. Natalia Goncharova, *The Bread Vendor*, 1911, oil on canvas, 100.5 x 87.5 cm, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

29. Natalia Goncharova, *Still Life with Pineapple*, *ca.* 1908, oil on canvas, 130 x 146 cm, Paris, Musée National d'Art.

30. Natalia Goncharova, *Cat with a Tray*, 1910–11, oil on canvas, 99.5 x 93 cm, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

31. Natalia Goncharova, *Portrait of Larionov and His Platoon Commander*, 1911, oil on canvas, 106.8 x 100 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

32. Mikhail Larionov, *Dancing*, 1909, oil on canvas, 66 x 95 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

33. Nikolai Sapunov, *The Ball*, *ca.* 1907–10, tempera on canvas, Moscow, Collection of V.A. Dudakov and M.K. Koschuro. Illustrated in A.A. Rusakova, *Simbolizm v russkoi zhivopisi* (Moscow, 1995), p. 284.

34. Vladimir Egorov, illustration of *The Ball* from L. N. Andreev's *Life of Man* for the Moscow Art Theatre, 1907, gouache, india ink and ceruse on paper, Moscow, The Gorky Museum of the Moscow Artistic Academy of Theatre. Illustrated in *Russkaia khudozhesvennaia kulura kontsa XIX–hachala XX veka (1908–1917)*, book 4 (Moscow, 1980), p. 175.

35. Sophia Baudouin de Courtenay, *Scene in a Tavern*, *ca.* 1911, published in *Ogonek* in 1911.

36. Mikhail Larionov, *Soldier's Tavern*, 1909–10, oil on canvas, 69 x 98 cm, Bâle, Galerie Beyeler.

37. Vincent van Gogh, *Night Café*, 1888, oil on canvas, 29 x 35 cm, New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery. Bequest of Stephen Carlton Clark.

38. Mikhail Larionov, *Quarrel in a Tavern*, 1911, oil on canvas, 70.7 x 93.6 cm, Nizhnii Novgorod, The State Art Musuem.

39. Mikhail Larionov, *Quarrel in a Tavern*, 1911, oil on canvas, 72 x 95 cm, Lugano, Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection.

40. Anonymous, *In the Tavern*, mid eighteenth century, woodcut, 36.2 x 30.3 cm., St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

41. Anonymous, *Paramoshka and Savoska as Card Players*, 1760s, woodcut, 29 x 33.1 cm, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

42. Anonymous, *Forma, Paramoshka and Yerioma*, 1760s, woodcut, 30.1 x 34.4 cm, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

43. Anonymous, *Know Thyself, Give Instructions in Your Own House*, eighteenth century, woodcut, 36.6 x 29 cm, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

44. Anonymous, *I Am a Hop High Head*, late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, copper engraving, 39.5 x 58.5, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

45. Anonymous, *Conversation of a Drinker with a Non-Drinker*, first quarter of the nineteenth century, copper engraving, 37.4 x 30.4 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

46. Anonymous, *The Drunkard in the Tavern*, second quarter of the nineteenth century, copper engraving, 35.5 x 27.5 cm, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

47. Anonymous, *Two Peasants Visiting a Tavern*, 1857, transfer lithograph, 23.7 x 36.5 cm, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

48. Natalia Goncharova. *The Drunks*, 1911, oil on canvas, 119 x 98 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

49. Anonymous, *The Barber Wants to Cut the Old Believer's Beard*, first half of the eighteenth century, woodcut, 36.4 x 30.5 cm, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

50. Novgorod School, *The Ascension*, 1542, tempera on panel, 179.8 x 138.2 cm, Novgorod, The Novgorod Museum.

51. Mikhail Larionov, *Circus Dancer Before Her Entrance*, 1911–12, oil on canvas, 105 x 73.5 cm, Omsk Museum of Fine Arts.

52. Mikhail Larionov, *Prostitute at the Hairdresser's*, *ca.* 1910, oil on canvas, 151 x 150 cm, Paris, Private Collection.

53. Mikhail Larionov, *Woman with a Hat*, *ca.* 1910–12, oil on canvas, 142 x 102 cm, Paris, Private Collection.

54. Henri Tolouse-Lautrec, *In the Wings*, 1899, crayon on paper, 31 x 20 cm, Cambridge, MA, The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University. Bequest of Grenville L. Winthrop.

55. Kees van Dongen, *Red Dancer*, 1907–08, oil on canvas, 99.7 x 81 cm, Moscow, The State Museum of Western Art.

56. Natalia Goncharova, *Wrestlers*, 1909–10, oil on canvas, 100 x 122 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

57. Natalia Goncharova, *Wrestlers*, 1909–10, oil on canvas, 118.5 x 103.5 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

58. Anonymous, *Stout Fellows, Doughty Wrestlers*, mid eighteenth century, woodcut, 34.5 x 29.5 cm, Moscow, The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts.

59. Ilia Mashkov, *Self Portrait with Petr Konchalovskii*, 1910, oil on canvas, 208 x 270 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

60. Still from *Drama in the Futurists' Cabaret Number 13*, released in 1914. Illustrated in C. Gray, *The Russian Experiment in Art, 1863–1922*, revised and enlarged by M. Burleigh-Motley (New York, 1986), p. 116.

61. Mikhail Larionov, *Scene – The Cinema*, 1912, oil on canvas, 56 x 69 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

62. Mikhail Larionov, *Women*, late 1890s, pastel and graphite on paper, 46 x 57.5 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

63. Mikhail Larionov, *Bathers*, *ca.* 1906, oil on canvas, 103 x 85 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

64. Mikhail Larionov, *Heads of Bathers (Study)*, 1908, oil on canvas, 66 x 95 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection.

65. Mikhail Larionov, *Bathers*, 1908, oil on canvas, 46 x 55 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection.

66. Paul Gauguin, *What Are You Jealous?* [*Aha oe Feii?*], 1892, 66 x 89 cm, Moscow, The Pushkin Museum of Fine Art.

67. Mikhail Larionov, *The Ladies' Hairdresser*, 1909–10, oil on canvas, 159 x 152 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection.

68. Mikhail Larionov, *Officer at the Hairdresser's*, 1909–10, oil on canvas, 117 x 89 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection.

69. Mikhail Larionov, *Sonia the Courtesan*, 1912, transfer lithograph and watercolour on postcard, 9.5 x 14.2 cm, Paris, Private Collection.

70. Edvard Munch, *Tête-à-Tête*, 1895, oil on canvas, 65.5 x 75.5 cm, Oslo, Municiple Museum (Munch Museum).

71. Mikhail Larionov, *The Blue Nude*, *ca.* 1908, oil on canvas, 73 x 116 cm, Lugano, Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection.

72. Paul Gauguin, *Alone* [*Otahi*], 1893, oil on canvas, 50 x 73 cm, Private collection.

73. Mikhail Larionov, *Portrait of Goncharova*, 1910, oil on canvas, 49.5 x 69.5 cm, Cologne, Gallerie Gmurzynska.

74. Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, 1538, oil on canvas, 120 x 165 cm, Florence, The Uffizi.

75. Eduard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863, oil on canvas, 130 x 190 cm, Paris, Musée d'Orsay.

76. Mikhail Larionov, *Adoration*, *ca.* 1909–10, pastel on paper, 27.7 x 24.8 cm, Geneva, Museum of Art and History.

77. Mikhail Larionov, *Katsap Venus*, 1912, oil on canvas, 99.5 x 129.5 cm, Gorky Art Museum.

78. Anonymous, *The Kazan Cat*, first half of the eighteenth century, woodcut, 33.6 x 26.9 cm, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

79. Mikhail Larionov, *Jewish Venus*, 1912, oil on canvas, 98 x 139 cm, 1912, Sverdlovsk State Art Museum.

80. Paul Gauguin, *The Queen, The King's Wife*, 1896, oil on canvas, 97 x 130 cm, Moscow, Pushkin Museum of Fine Art.

81. Pablo Picasso, *Woman with a Fan* (*After the Ball*), 1908, oil on canvas, 150 x 100 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum.

82. Pablo Picasso, *Woman with a Fan*, 1908, oil on canvas, 101 x 81 cm, Moscow, Pushkin Musem of Fine Art.

83. Mikhail Larionov, *Morning*, *ca.* 1908–10, oil on canvas, 72 x 67 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

84. Mikhail Larionov, *Gypsy Venus*, 1912–1913, oil on canvas, 68 x 85.5 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

85. Mikhail Larionov, Pochoir from *Voyage en Tuquie*, *ca.* 1928, gouache on paper, 28.3 x 20.8 cm, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

86. Anonymous, *The Annunciation with St. Theodore of Tyron*, second half of the fourteenth century, tempera on panel, 199 x 158 cm, Novgorod, Novgorod Museum of History, Art and Architecture.

87. Anonymous, *Alkonost and Siren, the Birds of Paradise*, late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, line engraving, 29.7 x 33 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

88. Mikhail Larionov, *Boulevard Venus*, 1913, oil on canvas, 116 x 86 cm, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

89. Mikhail Larionov, *The Waitress*, 1911, oil on canvas, 102 x 70 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

90. Mikhail Larionov, *Provincial Coquette*, 1909, oil on canvas, 81 x 65 cm, Kazan Art Museum.

91. Mikhail Larionov, *Mania*, *ca.* 1912, medium, dimensions and current whereabouts unknown. Illustrated in C. Gray, *The Russian Experiment in Art, 1863–1922*, revised and enlarged by M. Burleigh-Motley (New York, 1986), p. 108.

92. Angmasgsalik Eskimo statuette, early twentieth century, wood, 8.7 cm (height), Oxford, Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford.

93. Mikhail Larionov, *Mania the Bitch*, pochoir from *Voyage en Turque*, published in 1928, gouache, silk-screen and stencil on paper, 32.3 x 24.8 cm, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

94. Painted Wooden Figure, Abelam Tribe, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea, late nineteenth or early twentieth century, painted wood, 107.9 cm (height), New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial

Collection of Primitive Art. Purchase, Nelson A. Rockefeller Gift, 1962.

95. Mikhail Larionov, *The Whore*, 1913, gouache on paper, 51 x 35.4, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection.

96. Mikhail Larionov, *Spring 1912*, 1912, oil on canvas, 86.5 x 68.3 cm, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

97. Natalia Goncharova, *Kamennia Baba*, 1908, oil on canvas, 88 x 67.5 cm, Kostroma, Regional Picture Gallery.

98. Natalia Goncharova, *Pillars of Salt*, 1909, oil on canvas, 80 x 95 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection.

99a–b. Eskimo amulets, ivory and bone, St. Petersburg, Dmitri S. Varchavskii Collection. Illustrated in C. Burrus, *Les Collectionneurs Russes d'une révolution à l'autre* (Chêne, 1992), pp. 104–05.

100. Mikhail Larionov, *Happy Autumn*, 1912, oil on canvas, 53.5 x 44.5 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

101. Mikhail Larionov, *Seasons: Spring*, 1912, oil on canvas, 142 x 118 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

102. Mikhail Larionov, *Seasons: Summer*, 1912, oil on canvas, 138 x 117 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection, Paris, Private Collection.

103. Mikhail Larionov, *Seasons: Autumn*, 1912–13, oil on canvas, 136 x 115 cm, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

104. Mikhail Larionov, *Seasons: Winter*, 1912–13, oil on canvas, 100 x 122.3 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery,

105. Anonymous, *A Lesson for Husbands, Poor Peasant Countrymen and Extravagant Wives*, 1874, transfer lithograph, 32.1 x 39.6 cm, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

106. Anonymous, *The Peasant* [*Muzhichek*], 1849, copper engraving, 49.8 x 39.8 cm, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

107. Natalia Goncharova, *Round Dance* [*Khorovod*], 1911, oil on canvas, 133 x 100 cm, The Serpukhov History and Art Museum.

108. Alexei Vanetsianov, *In the Field: Spring*, before 1827, oil on canvas, 51.2 x 65.5 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

109. Vasilii Maksimov, *Family Division*, 1876, oil on canvas, 106 x 148 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

110. Natalia Goncharova, *The Fruit Harvest*, 1909, oil on canvas, 102 x 72 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

111. Natalia Goncharova, *The Fruit Harvest*, 1909, oil on canvas, 102 x 72 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

112. Natalia Goncharova, *The Fruit Harvest*, 1909, oil on canvas, 102 x 69 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

113. Natalia Goncharova, *The Fruit Harvest*, 1909, oil on canvas, 104 x 69 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

114. Paul Gauguin, *Gathering Fruit* [*Ruperupe*], 1899, oil on canvas, 128 x 190 cm, Moscow, The Pushkin Museum of Fine Art.

115. Paul Gauguin, *Man Picking Fruit from a Tree*, 1897, oil on canvas, 92.5 x 73.3 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum.

116. Paul Gauguin, *The Month of Mary* or *Woman Carrying Flowers* [*Te Avae No Maria*], 1899, 96 x 74.5 cm, oil on canvas, St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum.

117. Natalia Goncharova, *Haycutting*, 1910, oil on canvas, 98 x 117.7 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection, Private Collection.

118. Anonymous, *The Old Testament Trinity*, first half of the sixteenth century, St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum. Illustrated in A. Kostsova, *The Subject of Early Russian Icons* (St. Petersburg, 1994), p. 111.

119. Natalia Goncharova, *Haymaking*, 1910, oil on canvas, 118 x 96.7 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

120 a–d. Natalia Goncharova, *The Evangelists*, 1910–11, oil on canvas, 204 x 58 cm (each), St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

121. Natalia Goncharova, *Sheep Shearing*, 1907, oil on canvas, 118 x 102 cm, The Serpukhov History and Art Museum.

122. Natalia Goncharova, *Peasants Picking Apples*, 1911, oil on canvas, 104 x 97.5 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

123. Kazimir Malevich, *Woman with Buckets and a Child*, 1910–11, oil on canvas, 73 x73 cm, Amsterdam, Stedlijk Museum.

124. Natalia Goncharova, *Planting Potatoes*, 1909, oil on canvas, 111 x 131.5 cm, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne.

125. Jean-François Millet, *The Gleaners*, 1857, oil on canvas, 83.5 x 111 cm, Paris, Musée d'Orsay.

126. Natalia Goncharova, *Spring Gardening*, 1908–09, oil on canvas, 112 x 160 cm, London, The Tate Gallery.

127. Natalia Goncharova, *Washing Linen*, 1910, oil on canvas, 105 x 117 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

128. Natalia Goncharova, *Drying Linen*, 1911, oil on canvas, 102 x 146 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

129. Natalia Goncharova, *Fishing*, 1907, oil on canvas, 95.7 x 86.5 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

130. Natalia Goncharova, *Fishing*, 1909, oil on canvas, 111.7 x 99.7 cm, Lugano, Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection.

131. Natalia, Goncharova, *Pond*, *ca.* 1909, oil on canvas, 117 x 103 cm, current whereabouts unknown.

132. Natalia Goncharova, *Fishers* (*pond*), 1909, oil on canvas, 116.5 x 102.2 cm, Des Moines, IA, Louise Noun Collection.

133. Grigori Soroka, *Fishermen: View of Lake Moldino*, 1843–44, oil on canvas, 67 x 102 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

134a–d Natalia Goncharova, *The Mystical Images of War*, published in 1914, lithographs, 33 x 25 cm (each).

135. Dmitri Livitskii, *Portrait of Catherine the Great in the Temple of the Goddess of Justice*, *ca.* 1780, oil on canvas, 110 x 76.8 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

136. Natalia Goncharova, *Portrait of Larionov and His Platoon Commander*, 1911, oil on canvas, 119 x 97 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

137. Orest Kiprenskii, *Portrait of E. V. Davydov*, 1809, oil on canvas, 162 x 116 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

138. Auguste Desarnod, *The Battle of Bordino*, 1810s, oil on canvas, 105 x 144 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum.

139. Anonymous, *The Battle of Yeruslan Lazarevich with the Dragon Gorynych*, early nineteenth century, line engraving, 38.6 x 36 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

140. Anonymous, *Count Matvei Ivanovich Platov*, 1851, copper engraving, 29.6 x 38 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

141. Anonymous, *The Battle of Liebstadt*, first quarter of the nineteenth century, copper engraving, 29.8 x 38.7 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

142. Anonymous, *Russia's War with Japan in 1904*, 1904, lithograph, 43.5 x 30.5 cm, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

143. Anonymous, *Major General Alexander Seslavin*, 1839, copper engraving, 30.4 x 24.6 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

144. Pavel Fedotov, *The Major's Courtship*, 1848, oil on canvas, 58.3 x 75.4 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

145. Leonid Solomatkin, *The Carol Singers*, 1872, oil on canvas, 32.3 x 51.2 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

146. Ivan Terebenev, *Retreat of the French Calvary Who Ate Their Horses in Russia*, 1812. Illustrated in A. Kaganovich, *Ivan Ivanovich Terebenev, 1780–1815* (Moscow, 1956), p. 100.

147. Evgenii Lancere, *Funeral Feast*, published in *Adskaiia Pochta* (No. 2), 1906.

148. Anonymous, *Application to the Tsar*, *ca.* 1905–06. Illustrated in V.T. Pashuto et al., *Illiustrirovannaia istoriia SSSR* (Moscow, 1980), p. 193.

149. Anonymous, *The Ruling Class Feasts and Whores While the People Suffer and Toil*, published in *Satira*, no. 1, 1906.

150. Mikhail Larionov, *Puppet Theatre*, late 1890s, tempera on paper, 25 x 27.5 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

151. Mikhail Larionov, *Soldiers*, "first" version, *ca.* 1910–11, oil on canvas, 73 x 95 cm, London, Private Collection.

152. Mikhail Larionov, *Soldiers*, version 2b, *ca.* 1911–13, oil on canvas, 88 x 102 cm, reproduced in Eganburi (1913) and Parton (1993).

153. Mikhail Larionov, *Soldiers*, version 2c, post-1913, oil on canvas, 88 x 102 cm, Los Angeles, The Los Angeles County Museumm of Art.

154. Anonymous, *The Reception Room of Count A. Benkendorf*, late 1820s, watercolour on paper, 24.6 x 30.3 cm, St. Petersburg, The Pushkin Institute of Russian Literature.

155. Aldolf Jebens, *A Camp Scene Near Krasnoye Selo*, 1849, oil on canvas, 55.6 x 65.5 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

156. Pavel Fedotov, *At the Camp Near the Front Line: A Group Portrait of Officers of the Findland Regiment*, 1840–41, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum. Illustrated in M.N. Shumova *Pavel Fedotov Katalog* (St. Petersburg, 1993), p. 76.

157. Gustav Schwarz, *Unter-officers of the Life-Guard Findland Regiment with the Camp in the Background*, 1849, oil on canvas, 47 x 37 cm, Pavlosk, The Pavlosk Palace Museum.

158. Pavel Fedotov, *The Arrival of a Palace Grenadier at his Former Company of the Finland Regiment* (sketch), 1850, oil on cardboard, 25 x 39 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

159. Mikhail Larionov, *Soldiers Playing Cards*, *ca.* 1904–06, oil on cardboard, 38 x 46 cm, Paris, Private Collection.

160. Mikhail Larionov, *Resting Soldier*, *ca.*1911, oil on canvas, 119 x 122 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

161. Pavel Fedotov, *Encore, Again Encore!*, 1851–52, oil on canvas, 34.3 x 46 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

162. Mikhail Larionov, *Salvo*, 1910, oil on canvas, 88 x 89 cm, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

163. N.N. Troianskii, *Dura-Skazka* [*Joke-Folk Tale*], published in *Signal* (No. 2), 1905.

164. A.M. Vakhrameev, *Military Execution*, published in *Adskaiia Pochta* (No. 2), 19 XI 1905.

165. Anonymous, *Execution,* published in *Gammiun* (No. 1), 1905.

166. Mikhail Larionov, *Soldier in a Wood*, 1911, oil on canvas, 84.5 x 91.4 cm, Edinburgh, The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art.

167. Mikhail Larionov, *Soldier on a Horse*, 1911, oil on canvas, 87 x 99 cm, London, The Tate Gallery.

168. Anonymous, *St. George and the Dragon*, late fourteenth century, tempera on panel, 56 x 41 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

169. Anonymous, *Calvary Captain N.A. Mailevskii of the Life-Guard Hussar Regiment*, 1860s, photograph. Illustrated in V.M. Glinka, *Russkii voennyi kostium XVIII–nachala XX veka* (Leningrad, 1988), p. 64.

170. Anonymous, *The Officer and Private of the Saint Petersburg Dragoon Regiment*, 1802–03, tinted engraving, 19 x 27.1 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

171. Mikhail Larionov, *Smoking Soldier*, 1911, oil on canvas, 99 x 72 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

172. Pavel Fedotov, *Portrait of Pavel Petrovich Zhdanovich*, 1850–51, oil on canvas, 15.5 x 11.5 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Musuem.

173. Paul Cézanne, *Boy in a Red Vest*, *ca.* 1888–90, oil on canvas, 89.5 x 72.4 cm, Washington, DC, The National Gallery of Art. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon.

174. Wooden Soldiers, Bogorodskoye region, Vladimir Province. Illustrated in L. Dain, *Russian Toys* (Moscow, 1987), p. 72.

175. Sergei Chekhonin, *The Folktale of a Mama and Her Unscrupulous Boys*, published in *Zritel* (No. 21), 17 XI 1905.

176. Anonymous, *The Chernigovo-Saratovskie Petrushki*, published in *Zritel* (No. 21), 17 XI 1905.

177. Ivan Terebenev, *Play Acting*, 1812. Illustrated in A. Kaganovich, *Ivan Ivanovich Terebenev, 1780–1815* (Moscow, 1956), p. 109.

178. Mikhail Larionov, *The Head of a Soldier*, *ca.* 1911, oil on canvas, 55 x 44 cm, Private Collection.

179. Anonymous, *The Apostle Thomas*, fifteenth century, tempera on panel, 54 x 39.6 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

180. Mikhail Larionov, *Self Portrait*, *ca.* 1910–1912, oil on canvas, 104 x 89 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection.

181. Mikhail Larionov, *The Head of a Bull*, from the triptych *The Farm*, 1912, oil on canvas, 85 x 67 cm, Paris, Collection Cournand.

182. Novgorod School, *The Vernicle*, late twelfth–early thirteenth century, tempera on panel, 77 x 71 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

183. Natalia Goncharova, *The Jewish Family*, 1912, oil on canvas, 164 x 131 cm, Paris, Private Collection.

184. Natalia Goncharova, *Jewish Shop*, 1912, oil on canvas, 96.3 x 128.5 cm, The State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

185. Anonymous, *Is Explanation Necessary?*, published in *Zemshchina*, 1180, 6 December 1912.

186. Natalia Goncharova, *Jews of Various Ages*, reproduced in *Ogonek*, October 1913.

187. Natalia Goncharova, *Monk with a Cat*, 1912, oil on canvas, 100.2 x 92 cm, Edinburgh, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art.

188. Drawings of Monks' Hats. Illustrated in A. Feoktisov, ed., *Russkie Monastyri* (Moscow, 1995).

189. Carved wooden monk. Illustrated in *Russkaia narodnaia igrushka* (Moscow, [n.d.]), p. [21].

190. Yehuda Pen, *Divorce*, *ca.* 1907, oil on canvas, 144 x 187 cm, Byelorussian Museum of Arts.

191. Natalia Goncharova, *Jews: Sabbath*, 1912, oil on canvas, 137.5 x 118 cm, Tartaskoi Museum.

192. Anonymous, *The Fiery Ascension of the Prophet Elijah*, sixteenth century, St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum. Illustrated in A. Kostsova, *The Subject of Early Russian Icons* (St. Petersburg, 1994), p. 27.

193. Novgorod School, *John the Baptist in the Wilderness*, late fifteenth–early sixteenth centuries, St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum. Illustrated in A. Kostsova, *The Subject of Early Russian Icons* (St. Petersburg, 1994), p. 83.

194. Jewish tombstone with hands in the act of blessing, 1832, Kishnev. Illustrated in D. Goberman, *Jewish Tombstones in Ukraine and Moldova*, from the series *Masterpieces of Jewish Art* (Moscow, 1993), plate 245.

195. Anonymous, *The Mice Bury the Cat*, first half of the eighteenth century, woodcut, 32.8 x 57.3 cm, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

196 Marc Chagall, *The Circumcision*, 1909, oil on canvas, 74 x 67 cm, Tallahassee, FL, Collection of Professor and Mrs. Harry Walborsky.

197. Marc Chagall, *The Holy Family*, 1910, oil on canvas, 76 x 63 cm, Zurich, Kunsthaus.

198. Natalia Goncharova, *In the Studio*, 1907–08, 109 x 97 cm, Tula Regional Art Museum.

199. Natalia Goncharova, *Elder with Seven Stars (Apocalypse)*, 1911, oil on canvas, 147 x 188 cm, Paris, Private Collection.

200 Natalia Goncharova, *Virgin with Child*, 1910, oil on canvas, 120 x 107 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection.

201. Natalia Goncharova, *Christ in Majesty*, 1910–11, gouache on paper, 56.5 x 39 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection.

202. Mark Antokolskii, *Ecce Homo*, 1873, marble, 195 cm (height), Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

203. Natalia Goncharova, *Madonna and Child*, *ca.* 1912–13, oil on canvas, 98 x 90 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection.

204. Jewish Tombstone, Vilnia-Grodno region. Illustrated in F. Hubman, *The Jewish Family Album: Yesterday's World in Old Photographs*, ed. by Miriam and Lionel Kochan (London, 1975), p. 47.

205. Anonymous, *The Resurrection (Christ in Limbo)*, 1820s or 1830s, copper engraving, 38.1 x 30.8 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

206. Workshop of the Stroganov Family, *The Ascension*, early seventeenth century, St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum. Illustrated in A. Kostsova, *The Subject of Early Russian Icons* (St. Petersburg, 1994), p. 21.

Introduction

Natalia Sergeevna Goncharova (1881–1963) was born in Negaevo in the Tula province to an impoverished aristocratic family with strong ties to the Russian Orthodox Church. The daughter of architect Sergei Goncharov and a maternal relative of the musicologist Mitofan Baliaev, and great-niece and namesake of Aleksandr Pushkin's wife, Goncharova enjoyed a cultured and intellectual heritage. Religion was also a strong force in her upbringing. In fact, her maternal grandfather was a Professor at the Moscow Theological Academy. Goncharova spent her childhood at her grandparents' estate *Ladyzhino* at *Polotianyi zavod* before moving to Moscow in 1893 for her secondary schooling. The artist never lost her affinity for the countryside. She made repeated visits to *Ladyzhino* and devoted numerous canvases to the rural scenes that she witnessed there until she left Russia.

Unlike Goncharova, Mikhail Fedorovich Larionov (1881–1964) was born into a middle-class family in Tiraspol. The son of a military physician and pharmacist, and grandson of the mayor of Archangel, Larionov was raised in a less cultured environment at his maternal grandparents' home in Tiraspol, and at the age of 12 he moved to Moscow for his secondary education. Although he remained there until 1915, Larionov also regularly returned to his native land where he painted a number of canvases.

Goncharova and Larionov met in 1900 and became life-long companions, physically and artistically.[1] Both artists, labelled by the press as vanguard youth, became the leaders of Neo-primitivism, a profoundly nationalistic art movement in which its members turned to native traditions, such as icons, *lubki* [popular prints] and shop signs, as sources of inspiration. Neo-primitivism was also characterized by a strong interest in pictorial elements of colour, texture, line and volume, which resulted in a monoplanar representation, the denial of spatial depth, the use of patterning and the blending of text and image. The artists involved in this movement, led by Goncharova and Larionov, sought to assert the primacy of contemporary Russian over Western art, and their own as artists.

Both Goncharova and Larionov are known to have had strong personalities and, as we will see in Chapter I, to have held controversial sociopolitical views that challenged the Tsarist government, the Orthodox Church and the bourgeoisie.[2] This study proposes that their anti-

---

[1]It is generally thought that the two artists met while at the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture; however, Mary Chamot, *Goncharova: Stage Design and Paintings* (London, 1979), p. 7, presumably was informed by Goncharova that the two met in 1900, prior to her enrolment. Chamot also cites Eli Eganburi [Ilia Zdanevich], *Natalia Goncharova. Mikhail Larionov* (Moscow, 1913), p. XVII, who dates four portraits of Goncharova by Larionov to 1900. Eganburi, however, states that Goncharova met Larionov after she entered the school (p. 14). It is possible, then, that the four portraits were painted in 1901.

[2]The artists' strong personalities were crucial to the development of Neo-primitivism and, as this study will propose, to the anti-establishment ethos that underpinned their thematic series of 1907–14. Anthony Parton states that Goncharova's friendship with the Russian socialist poet Mikhail Tsetlin suggests that she entertained socialist sympathies. Parton, "Natalya (Sergeyvena) Goncharova," *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. by J. Turner (London, 1996) p. 594. Given the nature of Goncharova's relationship with Larionov, it is likely that he too shared these sympathies. Both artists were members of the vanguard youth and contemporary statements indicate that they held controversial and anti-establishment views; there is, however, no concrete evidence to suggest that they belonged to any left-wing political movement. Although the exact nature of the artists' political positions is currently unknown, it is known that Goncharova was a serious, uncompromising woman who "threw one challenge after another to society" and that Larionov enjoyed placing

establishment ideologies were crucial to their development of Neo-primitivism.

Other factors that determined the rise of the movement were Goncharova and Larionov's anti-academicism and changes in the Russian system of art patronage, which affected the growth of Russian modernism in general. The Russian Imperial Academy, which dominated artistic life in Russia, was founded in 1757 by Catherine the Great and modelled on the French Academy, its purpose to foster cultural development in Russia. Detached from native culture and traditions, like its French counterpart, the Russian Imperial Academy firmly grounded its ideal in the art of classical antiquity, with an emphasis on realism, albeit idealized, and noble subjects and figures.

In the mid nineteenth century Nicholas I amended the Academy's original statutes which resulted in a rigid institution subject to the tastes of the Imperial court. Avant-garde artists like Gonchaorva and Larionov viewed the Imperial Academy as a repressive Tsarist institution, while the Tsarist regime viewed challenges to its artistic prescriptions as a protest against autocracy.[3] Hence the development of Neo-primitivism by Goncharova and Larionov, to a certain extent, was part of a wider reaction against the stalemate Russian art had fallen into due to the excessive control by the Academy.

---

himself in situations that provoked authority. Alexandre Benois, "Dnevnik khudozhnika" *Rech*, 21 October 1913, no. 288, p. 4.

[3]Elizabeth Valkenier, *Russian Realist Art, The State and Society. The Peredvizhniki and Their Tradition* (New York, 1989), p. 4. For a complete discussion of the Imperial Academy, see ibid., Chapter 1 and *passim*.

The change in the Russian system of patronage began in the late nineteenth century and blossomed in the early twentieth century. Before the late nineteenth century artists depended mainly on the patronage of the aristocracy. However, the industrial revolution caused the economic rise of Moscow merchants, such as Pavel Tretiakov and Savva Mamontov, and permitted their patronage of artists. These individuals turned their attention away from traditional styles favoured by the aristocracy, supporting instead avant-garde trends mainly to present themselves to society as progressive thinkers and intellectually aware.

In addition to providing financial support through the patronage of avant-garde works, the merchants' influence extended to subsidizing exhibitions and publications. For example, in 1882 they supported the efforts of a group of progressive artists, the Wanderers [*Peredvizhniki*] who in 1863 resigned from the Imperial Academy and in 1871 began to organize their own travelling exhibitions to free themselves from bureaucratic control and to bring art to the people, as well as buyers.[4] In 1882 the Imperial Academy sought to limit the influence of this group by refusing them separate exhibition space and dispersing 100 of their works amongst 428 canvases on official themes. The Moscow merchants

[4]In a letter to the St. Petersburg Artel dated 23 November 1869, the Wanderers stated: "All of us… have agreed on a single idea concerning the usefulness of an exhibition managed by the painters themselves…. We think that there is a possibility to free art from bureaucratic control and widen the circle of those interested in art and, subsequently, to widen the circle of buyers." See ibid., p. 39. For a discussion of the notion of bringing art to the people, see pp. 45–48.

countered this by publishing a catalogue on their works.[5] The consistent support of merchants contributed to the rise in independent exhibitions and hence greater freedom for artists, including Goncharova and Larionov.

In the decade preceding the 1917 October Revolution artists moved beyond the realm of private exhibitions and organized self-promoting public events. During this period exhibition spaces were extended to include independent commercial galleries, such as Klavdiia Mikhailovna's Moscow Gallery, Karl Lemerse's Le Mercier Gallery and Nadezhda Dobychina's "Art Buro."[6] The gradual move from academic and state sponsorship to private patronage, and finally to independent commercial galleries, resulted in Russia's burgeoning art market, which further freed artists from academic conventions.

The Academy, the Imperial government and the aristocracy were certainly unwilling to relinquish control. Following the revolution of 1905 censorship laws were temporarily relaxed, only to be repeatedly tightened on subsequent occasions. The rise of private exhibitions and the increasing financial independence of artists, or at least the accessibility of alternate means of funding, caused exhibitions to be closely monitored by the government and artists' works increasingly confiscated.[7]

---

[5] *25 let russkago iskusstvo. Illiustrirovannyi katalog khudozhestvennogo otdela vserossiiskoi vystavki v Moskve 1882 g.* (St. Petersburg, 1881). Art historian Nikolai Sobko wrote the introduction to the catalogue, which was published by Mikhail Botkin.
[6] Works were exhibited at Klavdiia Mikhailovna's Moscow Gallery as early as 1907; Karl Lemerse's Le Mercier Gallery was opened *ca.* 1909; and Nadezhda Dobychina established her "Art Buro" in St. Petersburg in 1912.
[7] For example, works by Goncharova were confiscated in 1910 and 1914; by Valentin Serov in 1911; and by Larionov in 1911.

Goncharova and Larionov's development of Neo-primitivism should be viewed within the context of anti-academicism and modern patterns of artistic patronage in Russia, as well as the artists' sociopolitical beliefs. Goncharova herself differentiated between what she considered "true art" and that of the establishment,[8] a view that was supported by other Neo-primitivists like Aleksandr Shevchenko.[9] Goncharova defined true art as that which was not harboured by the established schools and societies.

Until now scholarly research has focused on formal innovations by Goncharova and Larionov and parallels between their progressive experiments and those of contemporary avant-garde artists in Western Europe.[10] Anthony Parton's recent study on Larionov, for example, barely touched upon the anti-establishment dimension of his art, even though clearly expressed in the art criticism of the time.[11] John E. Bowlt was the first to raise the wider issues, and Christina Lodder has also related these to several paintings in her own research.[12] Jane Ashton Sharp has since furthered our understanding considerably by reconstructing the prevailing

---

[8]Goncharova, "Preface," *Vystavka kartin Natalii Sergeevny Goncharovoi 1900–1913* (Moscow, 1913). See Bowlt, ed. and trans., *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism 1902–1934* (London, 1988), p. 56.

[9]Shevchenko, *Neo-primitivism. ego teoriia. ego vozmozhnosti. ego dostizheniia* (Moscow, 1913). See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, p. 53.

[10]D.V. Sarabianov, "Noveishie techeniia v russkoi zhivopisi predpevoliutsionnogo desiatiletiia (Rossiia i zapad)," *Sovetskoe iskusstvoznanie*, 1980, no. 1, pp. 116–60. G.G. Pospelov, *Bubnovyi valet. Primitiv i gorodskoi folklor v Moskovskoi zhivopisi 1910-kh godov* (Moscow, 1990).

[11]Parton, *Mikhail Larionov and the Russian Avant-Garde* (Princeton, 1995), passim.

[12]Bowlt, "Neo-primitivism and Russian Painting," *The Burlington Magazine*, March 1974, CXVI, pp. 132–40. Lodder, *Russian Painting of the Avant-Garde, 1906–1924* (Edinburgh, 1993).

intellectual climate that fostered Goncharova's Neo-primitivism.[13] It is the intention of this thesis to build upon this existing body of knowledge and research by investigating the ideological implications of these sources in relation to the subject matter chosen by Goncharova and Larionov for their Neo-primitivist thematic series.

Although this study focuses upon the Neo-primitivist works of Goncharova and Larionov, it represents only one aspect, among many, of the movement and the artists' output, a number of series executed between 1907 and 1914, specifically hooligans, prostitutes, peasants, soldiers and Jews.[14] The reason for this choice is that while these are recurring themes found in Goncharova and Larionov's body of works, they are, however, absent in the works of other Neo-primitivists like Shevchenko, hence unique to these individuals.

When these themes are considered together with the Neo-primitivist style, which in itself had an anti-academic bias, the challenging nature of these works is amplified. In general terms Goncharova and Larionov set up a series of discourses in which their thematic works called into question established formal practices and subject matter. They employed traditional sources to exploit the relations and the disjunctions inherent in accepted prevailing ideas. Goncharova and Larionov's use of a

---

[13]Sharp, *Primitivism, "Neoprimitivism" and the Art of Natalia Goncharova, 1907–1914* (Ann Arbor, 1992).

[14]This challenge to the establishment does not inform all of Goncharova and Larionov's works. Indeed, the majority of Goncharova and Larionov's Neo-primitivist canvases were concerned with still lives, landscapes and portraiture, and these paintings do not have the same edge of the artists' thematic series, which necessarily separates the latter from those more mundane subjects and calls attention to this choice of subject matter and the means of depiction.

non-academic aesthetic combined with unorthodox themes resulted in works that provocatively confronted the audience's sensibilities. In order to decipher the wide range of linguistic, cultural and sociopolitical references, this thesis will explore the relationship between the subject matter and its contemporary context.

The social outcasts in the series treated in this study are portrayed by Goncharova and Larionov in similar fashions as their still lives. The figures are reduced to mere objects, calling attention not only to the choice of subject matter but also to the means of depiction. It shall be argued that the artists, who perceived themselves as outsiders, continually crossed established boundaries as a means of expressing their critical attitudes towards accepted social and ideological norms and that the subject and aesthetic idiom utilized in these paintings reflect this.

Roman Jakobson has classified six components to the act of communication, and these can be applied to the analysis of Goncharova and Larionov's thematic series: (1) the addressor – a consideration of the personas of Goncharova and Larionov; (2) the addressee – an evaluation of their audience and their perceptions of the works; (3) the message – a study of symbols, subjects, iconography and cultural variations; (4) the code – a look at the use of pictorial devices; (5) the context – an exploration of the historical, social and political factors affecting conditions in which the works were produced; and (6) the medium – a consideration of the medium used.[15]

[15]Jakobson, *Framework of Language* (Ann Arbor, 1980).

This material will be presented in six chapters. Chapter I will explore the prevailing ideological climate in Russia in the early years of the twentieth century when Goncharova and Larionov were creating these images, and provide a cultural and political contextual framework both for the development of Neo-primitivism and the artists' choice of subject matter. It will be argued that, rejecting the notion of heroes as sanctioned by the government and the Orthodox Church (e.g., royalty, saints, military, political figures, and the like), the artists sought to redefine the hero as the outsider of modern society (e.g., artists, conscripts, gypsies, Jews, peasants and prostitutes), expressed in the primitive style favoured by the artists during this period and fuelled by their desire to shock and scandalize both their audience and the authorities.

Chapter II will investigate the artists' works representing low-life and hooligan subject matter. It will be argued that these pictures challenge and ultimately undermine the affectations of the civilized behaviour advanced by polite society.

Chapter III will examine Larionov's prostitute paintings, which went against the conventional idealized representations of the nude sanctioned by the academic canon. As we will see, Larionov's unorthodox treatment of the female form challenged the viewer's conception of the classical nude, prostitution and sexuality, as well as the role of women within the established Russian patriarchy.

Chapter IV will consider Goncharova's paintings of labouring peasants, which she represented in monumental terms. Changes resulting

from industrialization caused rural peasant women to be seen by society both as loyal citizens who continued traditional customs and ways of life and as the keepers of the moral fibre of the community. It is within this context that Goncharova's predominate choice of labouring women as a subject takes shape; and it shall be suggested that she highlighted the traditional way of rural life as a call for the regeneration of contemporary Russian society.

Chapter V will explore the paintings in Larionov's soldier series, which, can be divided into two groups: paintings that provide a social commentary on the plight of conscripts; and paintings that make political statements questioning the established Tsarist regime and its agents. It will be argued that, in both of these categories, Larionov debased traditionally revered sources, such as icons and *lubki*, that would have been immediately identified by his audience by incorporating the cruder stylistic devices to produce coarse paintings that mock the pretensions of the military. It was the soldier as a symbol of patriotism that he mocked, and by doing so he turned the satire onto the Tsarist regime.

Chapter VI will investigate Goncharova's use of Jewish themes. It shall be argued that in painting Jews, whose oppression and hatred was sanctioned by state and church, Goncharova sought to overthrow the existing order in art. It will be suggested that by exhibiting paintings on Jewish themes in settings sanctioned by government censors alongside works of a Christian character, she criticized the government's position on Jews, including attitudes against assimilation.

Although scholars like Elena Basner, Anthony Parton and Jane Sharp have alluded to the anti-establishment nature of Goncharova and Larionov's paintings, this study is the first to explore fully this ethos through an examination of the contemporary issues raised by the artists' Neo-primitivist thematic series of 1907–14.[16]

The reader should note that the transliteration used in this study is a modified version of the Library of Congress system, although the soft and hard signs have been omitted. Personal names that have become well established in the West have been retained (e.g. Alexander Benois, not Aleksandr Benua). Dates before 1917 are in the Old Style and are, therefore, thirteen days behind the Western calendar.

[16]Basner, "How Natalia Goncharova Fared with the Critics in the Russian Press, 1909–14," *Gontcharova Larionov*, trans by. S. Hippisley-Gatherum (Paris, 1995), pp. 188. Parton, *Larionov*, passim. Sharp, *Primitivism*, passim.

Chapter I
Context

On 22 December 1910 Goncharova, together with the organizing committee of the Society of Free Aesthetics, was officially charged with "the blatant display of corrupting pictures" arising from a private, one-woman show held in conjunction with a conference on 24 March 1910.[1] A conservative member of the press gained access to this invitation-only event and produced a scathing review in which he not only labelled the works as degenerate and pornographic, but also questioned their influence on a young audience:

> And most scandalous of all is that the painter presents herself as a woman, under the influence of a perverse form of vulgar decadence through which she has taken the liberty of crossing the boundaries of propriety.
> Amongst the most vile 'exhibition of pictures 24 March' are pictures number 6 – 'God' – and number 13 – 'The same' – [which] surpass any secret pornographic postcards. And the main horror still in this volume, is that among the public were the very young.[2]

This first article was followed by a satirical poem in *The Voice of Moscow* [*Golos Moskvy*] by a satirical poem penned by the unidentified "Weg" who attacked the leftist nature of the society:

> Literary blabbermouths,
> Half-witted poetics,
> Uncensored and impetuous,
> Prophets of aesthetics,

---

[1]The Society of Free Aesthetics, founded in 1906, was known for its active participation in intellectual and artistic pursuits that attracted an international audience, including art exhibitions. The organizing committee for Goncharova's 1910 exhibition consisted of V.Ia. Briusov, B.N. Bugaev (Andrei Belyi), V.O. Girshman, Professor K.I. Igumenov, V.A. Serov and Dr I.I. Troianovskii. Contemporary reports indicate that Goncharova exhibited "more than 20 works" at the Society of Free Aesthetics. Anonymous, "Brattsy-estety," *Golos Moskvy*, 69, 1910. See Larionov, "Gazetnye kritiki v roli politsii nravov," *Zolotoe runo*, 11/12, 1909/1910, November/December, p. 97.
[2]Larionov, "Gazetnye kritiki," pp. 97–98.

Symbolist-declaimers,
Decadent artists,
Though in art, reformers,
But in creativity bootmakers…
They wail, as if through brass trumpets,
And from their uncensored ravings
Only the poor walls blush
In the literary circle, etc.….[3]

On 25 March 1910, following the release of these two publications three nudes by Goncharova were confiscated by the police and a trial date scheduled for December 1910.[4]

These events clearly raise the issues of audience and artistic autonomy. The anonymous author of the original review was deliberately vague in detailing his main horror of the exposure of these works to "the very young" to play on contemporary fears that the works of leftist artists would corrupt Russian youth. However, Goncharova's works were exhibited not to impressionable children but at a meeting open exclusively to Society members who were already aware of and almost certainly sympathetic to her work.[5]

So, then, who constituted Goncharova and Larionov's audience, and who collected their works? Goncharova and Larionov's audience and

---

[3]"Weg", "Nash estety," *Golos Moskvy*, 70, 1910. See Valery Briusov, *Dnevniki, 1891–1910* (Moscow, 1927), pp. 191–92.

[4]The number of works confiscated has been listed as two or three. In *Dnevniki*, p. 192, Briusov, an organizer and co-defendant, states that two works were confiscated, yet in "Gazetnye kritiki" Larionov lists the number as three (p. 98). Eganburi states that the two confiscated works were *God of Fertility* (*Bog plodorodiia*) and *Model from Nature* (*v Natureshchitsakh*), Eganburi, *Goncharova. Larionov*, p. 16; while Chamot identifies two nudes and the *God of Fertility*. Chamot, *Goncharova*, p. 9. A contemporary interview with Goncharova also mentions three canvases. "Beseda s N.S. Goncharovoi," *Stolichnaia molva*, 115, 5 April 1910, p. 3. Pospelov, *Bubnovyi valet*, p. 27, concurs. Sharp, *Primitivism*, p. 339, simply states that "the police confiscated Goncharova's nudes." The evidence, most notably statements by Goncharova and Larionov, indicates that three works were confiscated, and it is likely that the confusion has resulted from the fact that two of the works share the same name.

collectors of their paintings included artists like Vasily Kandinsky, David Burliuk and Alexandra Exeter; writers and literary figures like Ilia Zdanevich, Valeri Briusov and *Vesy* editor Sergei Poliakov; lawyers like Mikhail Khodasevich; merchants like Ivan Morozov, Nikolai Riabushinskii and Ivan Troianovskii; and members of the artists' respective families.[6] Their audience also included other members of the urban bourgeoisie, like minor state officials, officers, students and the intelligentsia among whom it had become fashionable to attend avant-garde exhibitions.

Goncharova was almost certainly aware of the aspirations of the urban bourgeoisie. Elena Ovsiannikova has published a fragment of Goncharova's diary from 1912 in which the artist states:

> Wanda's [pianist Wanda Landowki] playing is similar to all that Greek, academic etc. art [including] candy boxes that are based on the Greek. There is much that is sweet in them, and one cannot help but enjoy them, and this is also pleasing…. In general music is an art that people can understand and that they confuse less with life. In painting, sculpture and architecture, the public are like savages and if, generally speaking, they are not savages, then they are very limited Philistines.[7]

When describing these members of her audience she, like Shevchenko and Larionov, used the term *meshchanin*, which translates to both (petty) bourgeoisie and Philistine, indicating that, although their audience was more varied, these artists directed their vanguard activities mainly towards the bourgeoisie.

---

[5]Larionov, "Gazetnye kritiki", p. 98 and Briusov, *Dnevniki*, p. 192.
[6]Eganburi, *Natalia Goncharova. Mikhail Larionov*, pp. I–XXI.
[7]Ovsianikova, "Iz istorii odnoi illiustratsii," *Panorama iskusstv*, 11, 1988, pp. 248–50.

Goncharova and Larionov had difficulty expanding their audience beyond these groups. There existed some interest in their works among the working class, which may have resulted in part from the greater literacy of the period and their ability to read and hence become interested in reports of the avant-garde.[8] High entrance fees to the exhibitions and evenings, however, limited their involvement. In 1925 L.M. Kleinbort published his reminiscences of the reaction of the working class to Goncharova's painting on a visit to her studio in 1913:

> 'What is Cubism and Futurism in painting and what is their significance for art and its future? Show us Natalia Goncharova's exhibitions,' they asked.
> They went to see Goncharova. Her oeuvre, reflecting contemporary art, was evaluated fairly truthfully by the workers.
> 'Well, she knows how to paint, but she skews things. My God how she skews things.'
> A futurist aeroplane hovering over a passing train [*Aeroplane Over a Train*] brought forth their laughter. The purposeful schematization of Goncharova's drawing stimulated an exchange of opinions:
> 'Well – we can draw like that too. Exactly like a child's notebook.'
> 'Perhaps we can draw like that, but those colours we'll never be able to find.'[9]

The reference to a child's notebook suggests an awareness of the avant-garde's interest in children's art, no doubt brought on by press reports and exhibition reviews.

The pluralistic nature of Goncharova and Larionov's audience is significant to the understanding of the Neo-primitive thematic series discussed in this study, as each sector of their audience would necessarily

---

[8]See Jeffery Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read: Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861–1917* (Princeton, 1985), Chapter IV.

form their own interpretations and perceptions of the works. Sharp convincingly argues that Larionov's work forced the audience to question their expectations of high art in a salon setting and that all aspects of exhibitions were deliberately coordinated in support of this, thereby "requiring that [the viewer] actively participate in constructing a meaning in the project."[10]

Larionov and Goncharova themselves recognized the variability of viewpoints, as indicated by statements in "Rayist Painting" where Larionov claimed that "people examine and perceive everything from the point of view of the style of their age...."[11] Officers, for example, would have read Larionov's soldier series differently than students and the urban bourgeoisie. The artists in the audience would have read the displayed works from a point of view that compared and contrasted them to their own sympathies, stylistic development and artistic output. It follows that this would have produced a competitive environment in which the internal conflicts between rival factions of the contemporary art world were enhanced.

The second issue raised by the events of 1910 is that of artistic autonomy. Eganburi and Chamot have identified one of Goncharova's confiscated works as *God of Fertility*, 1909 (Fig. 1).[12] Goncharova's

---

[9]Kleinbort, *Rabochii klass i kultura*, vol. II (Moscow, 1925), pp. 128–29.
[10]Sharp, *Primitivism*, pp. 171–72.
[11]"Luchistskaia zhivopis," *Oslinyi khvost i mishen* (Moscow, 1913), pp. 83–124. See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde,* pp. 94–95.
[12]Eganburi, *Goncharova. Larionov*, p. 16 and Chamot, *Goncharova: Stage Design and Paintings* (London, 1979), p. 9. Due to her close relationship with the two authors it is likely that Goncharova conveyed this information personally. Although the painting was described as a male nude, this work depicts a female nude. "Beseda s N.S. Goncharovoi,"

complete rejection of academicism and use instead of primitivism and a Cubist treatment, demonstrated by the fractured surface and sculptural quality of this figure, is no doubt what her critics perceived as scandalous. It is not surprising, however, that Goncharova turned to Cubism for the portrayal of this deity, as she later stated that the roots of Cubism could be traced to the ancient *Kamennye Baby* [stone statues].[13]

A statement published shortly after the works were removed from Goncharova's show indicates that she wished to emphasize the aesthetic properties of her art, which she considered paramount. The sympathetic author of this conversation with the artist stressed that the confiscated works were grounded in established artistic practice and stressed their Russian roots:

> The first two pictures are studies from live models painted during a class in the school of Goncharova, Larionov, Mashkov and Mikhailovskii, where Goncharova was teaching. The model in the first study was standing with one foot on a chair, her arms thrown back behind her head and in the second pose, with her arms folded across her waist. This same model was painted by the whole class, consisting of about 25 people of both sexes, at the same time. As for the third picture, it represents a stone idol, the picture is inspired by archaic art: Hindu, New Zealand, finally, and more closely, by Russian so-called '*Kamennye Baby*' that have been found in our southern steppes. The Stone God is depicted with those attributes with which he is always depicted, and these naturalistic details, are, of course, not the main focus of attention for the ordinary

---

p. 3. It is possible that Goncharova later reworked the canvas and added the breasts and the rectangular plane of colour between the effigy's legs. A published fragment from Goncharova's 1912 diary indicates that reworking canvases was integral to her method, and Loguine confirms that Goncharova continued to do this while in Paris. Ovsiannikova, "Iz istorii pervykh vystabok lubka," *Sovetskoe iskusstvoznanie*, 20, 1986, p. 423, and Tatiana Loguine, "Hommage a mes Maitres," *Gontcharova et Larionov. Cinquante ans à saint germain-des-prés*, ed. by T. Loguine (Paris, 1971), p. 230. The reviewer is cited in Larionov, "Gazetnye kritiki," pp. 97–98.

[13]Goncharova, "Cubism," 1913. See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, p. 78.

> uncorrupted viewer, as they were not in ancient Greek and Roman sculpture, which were covered with figs leaves only later when they entered papal collections.[14]

The school mentioned has been identified as that of Ilia Mashkov and A.N. Mikhailovskii, where Goncharova and Larionov probably taught between 1908 and 1910.[15] The reference to this school surely would have grounded Goncharova's treatment of the nude in established teaching methods.[16] Sharp has convincingly argued that, because of the emphasis on Goncharova's gender, this incident can be read as the predominantly male artistic establishment's response to a female artist who broke accepted cannons.[17]

By providing an academic framework for these paintings, the incident now hinged upon the question of contemporary art practices. The earlier published conversation with the artist foreshadowed the thrust of Goncharova's defence during the December trial, a defence that focused not upon moral or political agendas but on issues of style.[18] The defendants and Larionov claimed that no court had the right to decide such arguments because its representatives did not possess the artistic background necessary to judge whether these works had any aesthetic value.[19] Members of the Knave of Diamonds [*Bubnovyi valet*], a group

---

[14]"Beseda s N.S. Goncharovoi," p. 3.
[15]Pospelov, *Bubnovyi valet*, pp. 27–28. Located in Moscow on *Malyi Kharitonevskii pereulok*, the school was opened in 1902.
[16]Larionov, "Gazetnye kritiki," p. 97.
[17]Sharp, *Primitivism*, pp. 352–70.
[18]Goncharova was represented by Mikhail Khodasevich, father of the artist Valentina Khodasevicha and brother of the poet Vladislav Khodasevich, as well as a personal friend and collector of both Goncharova and Larionov's works. Larionov, "Gazetnye kritiki," p. 98.
[19]The defendants were Goncharova and the exhibition's organizing committee, V.Ia. Briusov, B.N. Bugaev (Andrei Belyi), V.O. Girshman, Professor K.I. Igumenov, V.A.

organized to provide an alternate means of exhibition to artists who objected to the stagnant policies of existing groups and societies, testified to the artistic merit of Goncharova's treatment of the nude, which reinforced the position that these were not legal but artistic issues. Owing primarily to the closed nature of the exhibition, Goncharova and her co-defendants were acquitted.[20]

In this trial, Goncharova and Larionov sought to deviate the censors' attention from the paintings' subject matter, instead focusing on the issue of aesthetic value. But subject matter was in fact a principal aspect of their art. In an impromptu speech at the Knave of Diamonds debate of February 1912, Goncharova linked subject matter and technique:

> Contrary to [David] Burliuk, I maintain that at all times it has mattered and it will matter what the artist depicts, although at the same time it is important *how* he embodies his conception.[21]

The following month, in a letter, Goncharova again emphasized that, "...at all times in the past and in the future it has always been and will be significant *what to depict and equally how to depict it*."[22] Elsewhere, she stressed that subject matter was as important as the purely formal criteria in any given painting:

> I acknowledge narration and illustration, painting which is ideological and philosophical and I can proceed from anything at all, only it is necessary to give all of this painterly form.[23]

Serov and Dr I.I. Troianovskii. For contemporary reports on the defence and the trial see ibid., pp. 97–98; "Moskovskaia khronika: Delo obshchestva sobodnoi estetiki," *Rech*, 23 December 1910, p. 3; and "Bubnovaia dama pod sudom," *Protiv techeniia*, 4 January 1911, p. 4.

[20]"Bubnovaia dama pod sudom," p. 4.

[21]Goncharova, *Cubism*. See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, p. 78.

[22]"Pismo N. Goncharovoi" *Protiv techeniia*, 3 March 1912.

[23]Goncharova, "Tvorchestvo kredo," 1913[?], RGALI, Moscow, Fond 740, op. 1, 2. For an English translation, see Sharp, *Primitivism*, p. 432.

These statements clearly suggest that the relationship between the choice of subject matter and the stylistic elements of Neo-primitivism was crucial. It was this combination of unconventional technique and traditional subject matter in Goncharova's Neo-primitivist art that resulted in her crossing the boundaries of propriety to present these so-called degenerate canvases.

The press recognized the broader implications of the defence's tactics before and during the trial: "this affair is crucial for artists generally, as it reflects an attempt to impose a process of censorship of free art."[24] The artists' claim that this issue did not fall within the jurisdiction of the police or the courts but should remain with the artists themselves was also central to Neo-primitivism, as it is in keeping with the ideology the artists advanced in the Neo-primitivist manifesto. Here Shevchenko claimed:

> We reject the significance of any criticism apart from self-criticism. Only the artist himself, who loves his art and concerns himself consciously with it, can precisely and correctly determine the merits, defects and value of its work. The outsider, the spectator – if he falls in love with a certain work – can, biased as he is, neither elucidate nor evaluate it on its true merits; if he regards it impassively, indifferently, he therefore does not feel it or understand it and hence has no right to judge.
> Art is the artist's experiences, his spiritual life, and nobody has the right to interfere with someone else's life.[25]

This focus on the painterly and spiritual qualities of an artist's output, mediated by his/her inward vision, would emphasize the progressive nature of Goncharova's paintings.

---

[24]"Delo obshchestva svobodnoi estetiki," p. 3.
[25]Shevchenko, *Neo-primitivism*. See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, p. 53.

The critical articles that preceded the confiscation of Goncharova's canvases, especially "Weg's" satirical poem, suggest that conservatives were concerned not only with the progressive nature of the decadent art but also the Society of Free Aesthetics, and its movement away from the Academy and towards an increasingly autonomous avant-garde.

Following the confiscation of her paintings, Goncharova felt it necessary to defend publicly the Society in response to the controversy arising from this exhibition of her work:

> And as for the 'Society of Free Aesthetics,' their meetings are in no way secretive. They are simply intimate gatherings of people who are interested in new forms of art. Occasionally guests participate by reading new verse, lectures and so forth.[26]

It seems that this justification was necessary. Charges, such as the "uncensored ravings" of Society members, indicate the sentiment of greater need for regulation of independent groups by the Academy, the Imperial government and their agents.[27]

Goncharova and Larionov's antagonism towards Academic art was fostered during their tenure at the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture.[28] The Moscow School was established as an art society in 1833 and recognized as an institution of higher education in 1843. It offered the only real educational alternative to the Imperial Academy in St. Petersburg, to which it was subject. Known for its liberal approach to

---

[26]"Beseda s N.S. Goncharovoi," p. 3.
[27]Op. cit.
[28]N. Moleva and E. Beliutin, *Russkaia khudozhestbennaia shkola vtoroi poloviny XIX-nachala XX veka* (Moscow, 1967), p. 283. Goncharova attended the Moscow School from 1901 to 1904 and from 1908 to 1909; barring periods of expulsion, Larionov attended from 1898 to 1910.

teaching, the Moscow School boasted a more progressive faculty and thus attracted artistically and politically open-minded students. N. Moleva and E. Beliutin, among others, compared the two institutions and found the Moscow School to be an open-minded institution that emphasized artistic autonomy:

> The Muscovites differed from the Academy... principally in their greater democracy across a wide spectrum of issues, their care for the individuality of the young artist, based upon an understanding of the specific conditions needed for creative freedom in mastery and its meaning for contemporary art. Not the least important factor was the gathering at the Moscow school of a collective of artists who held the most vanguard convictions and creative interests.[29]

This encouragement of the individuality of the artist proved fundamental to the development of the Neo-primitivist aesthetic.

Larionov entered the Moscow School in 1898, and studied under Isaak Levitan, Vasilii Baksheev, Valentin Serov and Konstantin Korovin. Of his teachers, it was Korovin whom Larionov later recalled to be the most progressive: "He launched the first modern painting in Russia… it was thanks to painters like Korovin that Russia began to discover its own path by the end of the nineteenth century."[30] In 1901 Goncharova enrolled in the sculpture class of Prince Pavel (Paolo) Trubetskoy and by 1904 most of the future avant-garde artists were studying at or affiliated with the Moscow School.

---

[29]Ibid.

[30]Franck Jotterand, "Des Ballets Russes aux Voyages dans l'Espace: Larionov et Nathalie Gontcharova," *L'illustré*, 39, 24 September 1959, p. 65.

The School was known for attracting and accepting pupils of all classes, some of whom were actively involved in demonstrations and riots during the 1905 Revolution.[31] Aleksei Kravchenko later recalled:

> The autumn of my second year of study, 1905, found me and my colleagues more often in a series of demonstrations in streets filled with banners and people, and rarely in studios, where, instead of plaster casts, now stood deathly quiet and burning eyes, young scorched faces. The doors of our school were wide open – and in the basement one could hear constant gun-sniping. The university, conservatory, technical institutes and we were the avant-garde movement among the student youth.[32]

In fact the students handed the School over to striking workers. Subsequently, the police raided the building. Disregarding the request of students and teachers to keep the school open, the administration closed the Moscow School on 14 November 1905, citing student violations as the cause. The students then met at the premises of the Literary and Artistic Circle to formulate a response to the official position of the director and the teachers' council, in which they demanded the director's resignation.[33]

Police also detained many of the School's students during the Revolution. Although the Moscow School reopened in January 1906, the government viewed the institution as a particular threat, and kept it under police surveillance so that the activities of both faculty and students could

---

[31]N. Dmitrieva, *Moskovskoe uchilishche zhivopisi vainiia i zodchestvo* (Moscow, 1951), pp. 152–55. The Revolution of 1905 began in St. Petersburg on 9 January 1905, when troops fired on a defenseless crowd of workers, who, led by a priest, were marching to the Winter Palace to petition the Tsar. "Bloody Sunday," as it came to be known, was followed in succeeding months by a series of strikes, riots, assassinations, naval mutinies and peasant outbreaks.

[32]Kravchenko's memories of this day are quoted in ibid., p. 154.

[33]Dmitrieva, *Moskovskoe uchilishche*, p. 154. The Literary and Artistic Circle [*Literaturno-khudozhestvennaia kruzhka*], founded in 1899, organized a variety of events and was also hugely popular. Audience participation was encouraged and these evenings became forums for passionate discussions and heated arguments between rival factions.

be closely monitored.[34] More arrests were made when police discovered underground printing activities.[35]

Although the extent of Goncharova and Larionov's involvement in these revolutionary activities remains unclear, they were undoubtedly affected by the circumstances of 1905–06. It is known that Larionov met architect Nikolai Vinogradov, with whom he later organized the First Exhibition of *Lubki* in 1913, while visiting his colleagues in prison, which suggests possible involvement in the disturbances.[36]

During the Revolution of 1905, participants called for the destruction of the symbols of the old order, and it was in the midst of this revisionist climate that Goncharova and Larionov came of age.[37] Goncharova and Larionov embraced this iconoclasm and, like many of their contemporaries, they intended their work to supplant the academic tradition. In 1908 the young Russian artists, including Goncharova, Larionov, the Burluik brothers, Exter, Aleksandr Bogomazov, Artur Fon Vizen, Aristarkh Lentulov and Aleksandr Matveev, established themselves as a real threat to the art establishment with the Link [*Zveno*] exhibition and manifesto, both of which antagonized the critics.[38] Generally accepted

---

[34]Moleva and Beliutin, *Russkaia khudozhestvennaia shkola*, p. 282. The authorities had long been wary of students. In 1899 it was declared that all students suspected of subversive activities could be pressed into military service. Stanislas Zadora, "Everyday Life," *Moscow, 1900–1930*, ed. by S. Fauchereau (New York, 1988), p. 35.

[35]Dmitrieva, *Moskovskoe uchilishche*, p. 155.

[36]Ovsiannikova, "Iz istorii pervykh vystavok lubka," p. 423.

[37]Abraham Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905: Russia in Disarray* (Stanford, 1988), *passim* and Richard Stites, "Iconoclastic Currents in the Russian Revolution: Destroying and Preserving the Past," *Bolshevik Culture*, ed. by A. Gleason et al. (Bloomington, 1995), pp. 1–24.

[38]It is of interest to note that the exhibition was held in Kiev. David Burliuk's manifesto "Golos Impressionista – v zashchitu zhivopisi" appeared in the exhibition catalogue, *Katalog vystavki "Zveno"* (Kiev, 1908). Extracts of the manifesto were printed in the

as the first leftist exhibition, the importance of the Link lies in the emergence of a Russian modernism and the ability of the vanguard youth to argue forcefully in support of their own artistic ethos.[39] The Link set the precedent, and following this exhibition the avant-garde regularly used their artistic output, as well as their subsequent outlandish behaviour, to challenge the status quo. It was within this climate of social criticism that Goncharova and Larionov's Neo-primitivism emerged.

Later reminiscences indicate that Goncharova and Larionov were amongst the most influential and radical of the vanguard youth at the Moscow School.[40] Larionov, in particular, enjoyed a history of conflict with authority at the School. According to his own version of the event, in October 1902 he was expelled from the institution for covering the walls of the student exhibition with 150 of his works and ignoring the pleas of his fellow students, the faculty and director Prince Lvov for their removal.[41] School records on the other hand state that the suspension was due to Larionov's chronic lack of attendance which resulted in the

---

journal *V mire iskusstv* (Kiev), 14/15, 1908, p. 20 and the newspaper *Kievlyanin*, 332, 1908. An English version of this text is included in Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, pp. 8–11. For critical reaction to this exhibition, see Ivan Chuzhanov, "Vystavki I: 'Zveno,'" *V mire iskusstv*, 14–15, 1908, pp. 19–21 and "Khudozhestvennaia khronika," *Iskusstvo i pechatnoe delo*, 1–2, Jan.–Feb. 1909, pp. 17–18.

[39]See, for example, Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, p. 10 and Parton, *Larionov* p. 17.

[40]Examples include Aleksandr Gerasimova who stated that "the scandalmonger Larionov, his companion and shadow, Goncharova and others of the same type who proudly called themselves aesthetes" controlled the School's juries. N.I. Moleva, ed., "Iz vospominanii A.M. Gerasimova," *Konstantin Korovin: zhizn i tvorchestvo. Pismo, dukumenty, vospominanii* (Moscow, 1963), p. 396; and Boris Ioganson who stated that Goncharova and Larionov used to "orate" in the School's dining room. B. Ioganson, "Korni zla," *Iskusstvo*, 2, March–April 1948, p. 7.

[41]Camilla Gray, *The Russian Experiment in Art, 1863–1922*, revised and ed. by M. Burleigh-Motley (London, 1986), p. 102. Tatiana Loguine, "La révolution artistique a Moscou au début du siécle," *Gontcharova et Larionov. cinquante ans à saint germain-des-prés*, ed. by T. Loguine (Paris, 1971), p. 13.

submission of paintings that had not been completed in Serov's class, as required, but independently at home.[42] Larionov was repeatedly placed on probation and was finally expelled in 1910 when he led 50 students in a demonstration protesting the increasingly conservative culture of the School.

Sergei Glagol related the events of Larionov's final expulsion from the Moscow School to the resignation in 1863 of a group later known as the Wanderers from the Imperial Academy in protest against the topic of the historical section of the annual Gold Medal competition. The theme set by the Academy was "the Feast of the Gods on Valhalla" and the group refused to paint a scene so irrelevant to contemporary social needs. Both incidents, as Glagol pointed out, involved the question of artistic freedom versus state regulation, except that the Wanderers were proactive in leaving the Academy, whereas the vanguard youth were expelled.[43]

Goncharova and Larionov, in self-propagating manifestos and statements, confirmed that they perceived themselves as being at the forefront of the art world. Goncharova, for example, stated:

> If I clash with society, this occurs only because the latter fails to understand the bases of art and not because of my individual peculiarities, which nobody is obliged to understand.[44]

As we will see, Goncharova and Larionov also presented confrontational themes in their Neo-primitivist thematic series, and in their comportment. They, along with other members of the avant-garde, often used face-

[42]RGALI, fond 680, op. 3, ed. kh. 56.

painting and outlandish dress and insulted, fought and threw water on their audiences, to further this image. Larionov was perceived as a scandalmonger, and the uncompromising Goncharova was called "the suffragette of our painting."[45] Indeed, Robert Falk recalled that "before every exhibition Larionov skilfully hypnotized the public, he prepared them."[46] Contemporary press reviews and caricatures demonstrate that Goncharova and Larionov were successful in cultivating this perception.[47]

Goncharova and Larionov also used the East–West debate as a tool of confrontation. According to Shevchenko, Neo-primitivism arose from the fusion of Eastern and Western forms, and Goncharova and Larionov worked through a series of Western styles before arriving at their own Neo-primitivist style.[48]

Goncharova and Larionov's tenure at the Moscow School fostered their experimentation with nineteenth- and twentieth-century Western styles, encouraged by professors such as Korovin and Serov. As a result, in 1906 when Sergei Diaghilev asked Larionov to help organize the Exhibition of Russian Art at the Paris *Salon d'Automne*, he contributed six impressionist landscapes and Goncharova four impressionist pastel

---

[43]Glagol, "K intsidentu v uchilishche zhivopisi vaianiia i zodchestva," *Stolichnaia molva*, 12 April 1910, p. 10.
[44]Goncharova, "Preface." See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, p. 58.
[45]Eol, "Talent v tupike," *Rul*, 30 September 1913. See Sharp, *Primitivism*, p. 374.
[46]Falk, *Besedy ob iskusstve. Pisma. Vospominaniia o khudozhnike* (Moscow, 1981), p. 68.
[47]See, for example, *Stolichnaia* molva, 3 December 1912; *Golos Moskvy*, 215, 18 September 1913. *Rannee utro*, 219, 22 September 1913, p. 3 and *Moskovskaia gazeta*, 227, 7 October 1913, p. 3.
[48]Shevchenko, *Neo-primitivism*. See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, p. 48. Pospelov, *Bubnovyi valet*; Parton, *Larionov*; Sharp, *Primitivism*; and Bowlt, "Neo-primitivism and Russian Painting," have already addressed the East–West question in relation to the development of Neo-primitivism and Russian Modernism.

lansdscapes.[49] Larionov travelled to Paris for this exhibition, which proved significant in a number of ways. First, as the show comprised works from the fifteenth century through the most current trends, it gave Larionov the opportunity to view his within a historical and cultural context of 500 years of native art. Secondly, it provided him with the opportunity for a first-hand comparison of his own artistic developments with that of recent French trends, including those practised by the Symbolists, the Nabis and the Fauves. Finally, and perhaps most instrumental to the development of his Neo-primitivist aesthetic and ethos, Larionov viewed the great Cézanne and Gauguin retrospectives while in Paris. Although Goncharova did not attend these exhibitions, given the nature of their relationship she no doubt would have been informed of them by Larionov.

Later, in 1908, the Golden Fleece [*Zolotoe runo*] exhibition was held in Moscow. It featured 197 paintings and 39 pieces of sculpture by Western artists, providing Russian audiences with their first large-scale exposure to Western trends, including French Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Symbolism, the works of the Nabis and Fauvism. The Golden Fleece proved hugely popular with the public and artists alike. As the exhibition also featured works by a number of Russians including Goncharova and Larionov, here too they were subjected to immediate

[49] *Exposition de l'Art Russe* (Paris, 1906). Goncharova contributed *A Village near Moscow* (cat. 154); *In the Countryside* (cat. 155); *Moscow* (cat. 156); and *In Moscow* (cat. 157). Larionov paintings included *Acacias in Bloom* (cat. 265); Cimes d'arbres (cat. 266); *Roses* (cat. 267); *Garden* (cat. 268); *Muguets* (cat. 269); and *Landscape* (cat. 270).

comparisons between their works and those of their Western counterparts.[50]

Journals like *The World of Art* [*Mir iskusstva*], the *Golden Fleece* and *Apollon* fostered Russian artists' contact with Western art not only by organizing exhibitions but also through publishing reproductions of and articles on Western art, as well as translating Western artists' treatises.[51] The aforementioned flurry of activity by Russian collectors in the early twentieth century also gave the vanguard artists a primary source of contact with Western trends. Sergei Shchukin and Ivan Morozov not only avidly collected contemporary Western painting but they also opened their homes to Russian artists for the study and contemplation of their collections.[52]

Further, numerous Russian artists travelled abroad and were able to view the works of Westerners in a Western setting. Kandinsky, for example, stimulated the interests of both Russian and German artists by disseminating the accomplishments of the Eastern and Western avant-garde through lectures, publications and exhibitions in both countries.

---

[50]Goncharova exhibited the following works: *Petrovskii Park* (cat. 1); *Singers on an Open Stage* (cat. 2); *City Landscape* (cat. 3); *Bouquet of Autumn Leaves* (cat. 4); *Spring Landscape* (cat. 5); illustrations for *Knut Gamsun* (cat. 6); and *Street Impressions* (cat. 7). Larionov's contributions included: *Bathers in the Morning* (cat. 34); *Bathers at Noon* (cat. 35); *Evening Bathing* (cat. 36); landscapes from the series *The Garden* (cats 37–39); *Still life* (cat. 40); *Roses* (cats 41–42); *Rain* (cat. 43); *Spring* (cat. 44); *Lilac* (cat. 45); and *Flower Vendor's Table* (cat. 46).

[51]See, for example, *Mir iskusstva*, 2–3 and 7, 1901; *Zolotoe Runo*, 7–8, 1908; Moris Deni, Ot Gogena i van Gogh kak klassitsizmu," *Zolotoe runo*, 5, 1909, pp. 63–68 and 6, pp. 64–7; Anri Matiss, "Zametki khudozhnika," *Zolotoe runo*, 6, 1909, pp. iii–x; Charles Morice, "Gogen kak skulptor," *Zolotoe runo*, 7–9,1909, pp. 132–35 and 10, pp. 47–51; *Zolotoe runo*, 2–3, 1909, pp. 80–86; and J. Meier-Graefe, "Giustav Kurbet," *Apollon*, 1, 1911, pp. 12–22.

[52]The influence of individual works from these collections will be discussed in the picture analysis sections of the chapters that follow.

The reliance of the young Russian artists on Western art, particularly that of Cézanne, Gauguin and Matisse, was recognized by the critics. For instance, when reviewing the second Golden Fleece exhibition Igor Grabar called Larionov a "Frenchman," indicating the influence of the Post-Impressionists and Fauves on canvases such as *Fishes* (cats 63 and 64), *Heads of Bathing Women* (cat. 65) and *Through the Nets* (cat. 68).[53] Aleksandr Rostislavov cited the French Impressionists, van Gogh, Cézanne and Gauguin as influential to Goncharova's early landscape, still life and portrait paintings; and Eganburi likened both artists to *Le Douanier* Rousseau.[54]

Goncharova, Larionov and their vanguard contemporaries utilized Western modernism as a means of both exploring pictorial problems and questioning the existing art standards in Russia. Initially used to oppose the tradition of high art and realism imposed by the Imperial Academy and the Wanderers, who by this time had been subsumed back into the Academy, respectively, Goncharova and Larionov's appropriation of Western painting can clearly be read as a statement against the current artistic canon.[55] Goncharova and Larionov originally synthesized French trends to stimulate change in Russian painting. They then turned to the East, which they considered the source of all artistic innovation:[56]

---

[53]Grabar, "Mosvovskie vystavki II: 'Zolotoe runo,' 'tvorischestvo,' 'peredviahniki," *Vesy*, 2, 1909, p. 108, trans. by D. Riley.
[54]Rostislavov, "Sverkaiushchii talant (vystavka kartin N.S. Goncharovoi)," *Rech*, 23 March 1914, p. 3. Chuzhoi, "Moskovskie otliki, Oslinyi khvost," *Rech*, 13 March 1912, p. 2. Eganburi, *Natalia Goncharova. Mikhail Larionov*, p. 23.
[55]See Valkenier, *Russian Realist Art*, passim.
[56]Burliuk, "The Voice of an Impressionist: In Defence of Painting," *V mire iskusstv* (Kiev), 14/15, 1908, p. 20. See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, p. 11.

> We have learned much from Western artists, but from where do they draw their inspiration if not from the East?… The Stone Age and the caveman's art are the dawn of art. China, India and Egypt with all their ups and downs in art have, generally speaking, always had a high art and strong artistic traditions. Arts proceeding from this root are nevertheless independent: that of the Aztecs, Negroes, Australian and Asiatic islands – the Sunda (Borneo), Japan, etc. These generally speaking represent the rise and flowering of art….
> The West has shown me one thing: everything it has is from the East.*…
> *The impressionists from the Japanese. The synthesists, Gauguin from India spoiled by its early renaissance. From the islands he apprehended nothing, apart from a tangible type of woman. Matisse – Chinese painting. The cubists – Negroes (Madagascar), Aztecs… generally speaking, what is the Romanesque style but the last stage of Byzantine development? Romanesque style is based on Grecianised, Eastern, Georgian and Armenian models…[57]

When Western forms were finally accepted, and indeed lost their shock value as the public had assumed a level of comfort with these trends, Larionov, Goncharova and the Neo-primitivists changed their stance to anti-Western, denouncing those who still practised in Western derivative styles. In the autumn of 1910 Goncharova and Larionov were involved in the founding the Knave of Diamonds. *Bubnovyi valet* [Knave of Diamonds] was a contemporary expression for prisoners, a name suggested by Larionov to highlight the group's perceived role as outcasts both socially and artistically.[58] He may also have used this name to suggest that contemporary artists were prisoners of the standards of the Academy.

By December 1911 Larionov, during an interview published in *Golos Moskvy*, accused members of the Knave of Diamonds of stagnation,

---

[57]Goncharova, "Preface." See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, pp. 57–58.
[58]Pospelov, *Bubnovyi valet*, pp. 98–104.

pointing out that by this time audiences were already acquainted, if not bored, with its slavish adherence to French modernism:

> They are academics, school-like academics.
> Just recently new and young, they already are part of the past. They are history.
> If you are struck by their colours, disturbed by their drawing, don't believe it. Remember, this you have seen before, it represents something familiar.[59]

What had been a successful means of challenging the art authority had now become accepted by the public.[60] Here Larionov accused the Knaves of "Repinism." The bourgeois appropriation of the Knave of Diamonds group was similar to the subsumation of the Wanderers back into the Academy.

By assuming this new stance, Goncharova and Larionov sought to distinguish themselves from other artists of the vanguard youth, like David Burliuk, Ilia Mashkov, Petr Konchalovskii, Robert Falk and Aristarkh Lentulov, whom they asserted no longer sought new paths. Larionov stated:

> One senses a calm, the need for a comfortable corner and a petite bourgeois desire to speculate on the advertising value of the name.
> The public knows the 'Knave of Diamonds' and will of course go to it more readily than to any other exhibition.
> We on the other hand are free.
> We were the 'Knave of Diamonds.' This year we will be the 'Donkey's Tail,' next year as 'Target.'[61]

[59]Cherri, "Ssora 'khvostov' s 'valetami'," *Golos Moskvy*, 285, 11 December 1911, p. 5.
[60]Ibid.
[61]Ibid.

Goncharova and Larionov both perceived and publicized themselves not as complacent but as truly avant-garde artists who continually strove forward to cause innovative changes in the art world.

The artists made their positions clear in the press and at the Knave of Diamonds debate held on 12 February 1912 at the Polytechnic Museum in Moscow. Tickets for the thousand-seat auditorium of the Museum sold out, no doubt since the audience anticipated a scandal between members of the Knave of Diamonds and Larionov and Goncharova who, as Larionov had recently announced in *Golos Moskvy*, had acrimoniously left the "popular" group to organize the Donkey's Tail.

The evening began with a lecture on "Free Art" by Nikolai Kulbin. David Burliuk then spoke on the history of art, and showed a number of lantern slides including Egyptian, Assyrian and contemporary French art, as well as works by Knave of Diamonds artists and Goncharova, which did not sit well with her, now the co-founder of the Donkey's Tail. Following talks by Voloshin and "a Knave," Goncharova objected to the inclusion of her paintings *Spring in the Country* and *Spring in the City*, both dating to 1910. Goncharova's impromptu speech here foreshadowed her tracing of Western art to its Eastern roots in her in her later "Preface" to her solo exhibition of 1913, mentioned above.[62] At the Knave of Diamonds she alleged that the formal roots of French Cubism were to be found in primitive Russian sculpture:

---

[62]Goncharova, "Preface." See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, pp. 57–58.

> Cubism is a positive phenomenon, but it is not altogether a new one. The Scythian stone images, the painted wooden dolls sold at fairs are the same Cubist works.[63]

As the French Cubists found their point of departure in monuments of Gothic sculpture, so should the Russian avant-garde turn to their own native traditions as the springboard for contemporary paintings.

By 1913 Goncharova and Larionov became more aggressive in their stance against Western art. The opening sentence of their "Rayist and Futurist Manifesto" declares, "We rayists and futurists do not wish to speak about new or old art, and even less about modern Western art."[64] The artists went on to proclaim that the West had a negative effect on the East and on art in general, "We are against the West, which is vulgarising our forms and Eastern forms, and which is bringing down the level of everything."[65] Their vehement denunciation of the West further suggests that Goncharova and Larionov were anxious to disassociate themselves from it and to assert the primacy of their own Eastern style, Neo-primitivism.

Hence, Neo-primitivists sought to examine, and to seek their inspiration from traditional Russian *lubki*, icons, trays, signboards and other similar objects. Goncharova, Larionov and others professed concern for the cultural context of these objects, and they are known to have admired their simplicity and directness.[66] They in fact amassed their own collections of Russian folk art. This nationalist spirit was augmented by

---

[63]Goncharova, "Cubism." See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, p. 78.
[64]Larionov and Goncharova, "Rayists and Futurists: A Manifesto," *Oslinyi khvost i mishen* (Moscow, 1913). See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, p. 87.
[65]Ibid., p. 90.

Goncharova and Larionov's provincial backgrounds, ties they actively maintained through regular sojourns home.

Shevchenko in his Neo-primitivist manifesto provided three applications to the term "primitive:" to denote underdeveloped societies and their cultures; to put forth the views of the essential purity and goodness of the primitive, which by implication is in direct contrast to the decadence of civilized Western societies; and in a very broad sense also to denote non-Western culture.[67]

Central to the development of their primitivist ideology was industrialization. The primitivist ideology assumed that there was a relationship between simple people and direct or purified expression; it exalted peasant and folk customs as evidence of some kind of innate creativity, thought to be threatened by the advent of industrialization and its effect on society.

> The Earth and Nature no longer exist in their conventional sense [Shevchenko wrote in his manifesto]. They have been turned into building foundations, into asphalt for pavements and roads. The Earth and Nature remain only a memory, like a fairy tale about something beautiful and long past.
> The factory town rules over everything.
> [...]
> The world has been transformed into a single monstrous, fantastic, perpetually moving machine...[68]

Arthur O. Lovejoy and George Boas define this attitude as "the discontent of the civilized with civilization, or some characteristic feature of it,"

[66]Shevchenko, *Neo-primitivism*. See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, pp. 44–49.
[67]Ibid., pp. 44–54.
[68]Ibid., pp. 44–45.

which motivated the artists to seek a simpler society.[69] This subject matter, then, provided an alternative to the complicated, over-refined society in which they and their audiences lived. The artists were also interested in peasant rituals, myths and various forms of worship, which influenced not only their art but also their unusual public behaviour, like face painting, outlandish dress and tango dancing.

These nationalistic attitudes and sources of inspiration were not new. Goncharova and Larionov's choice of outsiders as the subject of their thematic series was probably informed by the Wanderers' choice of subject matter. For example, Ilia Repin's early work *Bargehaulers on the River Volga*, 1870–73, is a study of human misery, and the men are metaphors for Russia itself (Fig. 2). The impetus for this painting was a scene he witnessed while walking along the bank of the River Neva where he was struck by the contrast between a group of barge haulers and young picnickers.[70] Goncharova and Larionov would base some of their later thematic series, such as their peasant and soldier paintings, on scenes that they too had observed directly.

The inspiration from indigenous art existed in the Neo-Russian, or Neo-National, movement, popular during the last three decades of the nineteenth century. Art colonies were established by wealthy patrons who embraced the movement, like Savva Mamontov's Abramtsevo founded in

[69]Lovejoy and Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (New York, 1980), p. 7.
[70]See Sarabianov, *Russian Art from Neo-Classicism to the Avant-Garde: Painting, Sculpture and Architecture* (London, 1990), pp. 136–38.

1870 and Princess Mariia Tenisheva's Talashkino in the 1890s.[71] These colonies advocated the continuation of native traditions and the revival of peasant crafts, because it was felt that Russia's rich cultural heritage had much to offer modern artists in the form of motifs and means of execution, but was also under threat of extinction because of increasing industrialization. Harking to the past as a critique of modern society can be related to the political beliefs of the Pan-Slavists.[72]

Elena Polenova looked to native traditions for the sources of modern art, and this resulted in what Jeremy Howard has labelled "revisionist modernism."[73] The concept of blurring the distinctions between high and low art, as well as bringing Russian folk art to a modern audience, stems from Polenova. Stylistically the bold simplicity and naïve childlike qualities of Polenova's works, such as *The Wild Beast (The Serpent)*, 1895–98, also provide precedents to Goncharova and Larionov's Neo-primitivist canvases (Fig. 3).

Polenova's primitive aestheticism and stylized ornament is also found in the work of Nicolas Roerich, whose artistic output was informed by his interest in mythical ancient Russia and his archaeological

---

[71]For further information on these two colonies, see Nina Beloglazova, *Abramtsevo* (Moscow, 1981); Alison Hilton, *Russian Folk Art* (Bloomington, 1995), Chapter 16; Howard, *Art Nouveau* (Manchester, 1996), pp. 137–39 and 144–47; Boris Rybchenkov and Alexander Chaplin, *Talashkino* (Moscow, 1973); and Wendy R. Salmond, *Arts and Crafts in Late Imperial Russia: Reviving the Kustar Art Industries, 1870–1917* (Cambridge, 1996).

[72]Pan-Slavists hoped to spread a national consciousness among the Slavs. Both a theory and a movement, Pan-Slavism promoted the political unity of all Slavs. Advocated by various individuals from the seventeenth century, in the nineteenth century it developed as an intellectual and cultural movement stimulated by the rise of romanticism and nationalism.

[73]Howard, "Elena Polenova," *Dictionary of Women Artists*, ed. by D. Gaze (London, 1997), p. 1103.

expeditions and visits to old Russian cities in 1903–04. These activities fostered his interest in folk art. Roerich also looked eastward for his personal Neo-National style. For example, his murals for the Church of the Holy Spirit at Talishkino, 1902–14, are a synthesis of Russian Romanticism and traditional Buddhist art. This broad interest in Eastern art as well as the amalgamation of international styles were qualities of his art that were shared by Goncharova and Larionov.

The Symbolists' rejection of traditional iconography also influenced Goncharova and Larionov's use of form and subject as an aesthetic focus. The Symbolists felt that art should transcend reality and communicate inner meaning. In Viktor Borisov-Musatov's *Spring*, 1898–1901, for example, line and colour were freely blurred into one another to produce a fluid work that emphasizes the pictorial surface (Fig. 4). The real subject here is the emotional response to nature rather than the intellectual. Goncharova and Larionov both experimented with Symbolism before developing Neo-primitivism, and works such as *Garden*, 1907, indicate the full extent of the influence of this movement on Larionov (Fig. 5). The emphasis both on the decorative qualities of the surface and the pictorial and emotional elements of painting would prove influential in his and Goncharova's Neo-primitivist canvases.

Goncharova and Larionov's concern with pictorial elements was shared by a number of their contemporaries, such as Pavel Kuznetsov.[74]

[74]Goncharova and Larionov acknowledged the influence of "contemporary" Western artists on their own stylistic development; however, the most influential Westerners had developed their own styles almost a generation before the advent of Neo-primitivism. By placing the emphasis on French artists, the role of their Russian contemporaries was

Kuznetsov's use of line and colour harmonies is synchronous with Goncharova and Larionov's emphasis on the expressive potential of the formal qualities of painting. In 1906 Kuznetsov's *The Blue Fountain*, 1905–06, was displayed at the St. Petersburg World of Art exhibition and reproduced in *The Golden Fleece* (Fig. 6).[75] *The Blue Fountain* is an atmospheric work in which blue and grey tones dominate the canvas and the brushwork suggests flowing water. Similar qualities are found in Larionov's *Rain*, 1907–08, which was exhibited at The Golden Fleece in 1908 (Fig. 7).[76] Works such as *Sheep Shearing*, 1910, demonstrate that Kuznetsov also shared an interest in both primitive cultures and nature that was fuelled in part by his childhood in the Steppes of Russia (Fig. 8). This is similar to Goncharova's depiction of peasant themes stemming from her childhood in the Tula province.

Also of great significance for the Neo-primitivists was Niko Pirosmanashvili (Niko Pirosmani), a self-taught Georgian painter who, after stints as a brakeman and a businessman, painted signboards and murals for shopkeepers. In his spare time Pirosmanashvili occupied himself with painting portraits, animals and genre scenes, and through this developed his own personal style that was firmly rooted in Georgian folk art and medieval miniatures (Fig. 9). Although Pirosmanashvili has been compared favourably with *Le Douanier* Rousseau, the Frenchman copied

---

minimized. Goncharova and Larionov's paintings *were* influenced by their Russian contemporaries and, although they professed to champion Eastern forms, it seems that they did not fully acknowledge their local rivals. I thank Jeremy Howard for his direction in this.

[75] *Vystavka mira iskusstv* (St. Petersburg, 1906), cat. 134. 5, *Zolotoe Runo*, 1907, p. 7.

[76] *Katalog vystavka kartin – "Salon zolotogo runa,"* (Moscow, 1908), cat. 46.

sanctioned works from the Louvre as part of his training and he desired recognition by the French Academy and critics. Pirosmanashvili, on the other hand, had no such aspirations. It is likely that this complete disregard for the art establishment would have made the Georgian even more attractive to Goncharova, Larionov and the avant-garde.

Early in 1912 Mikhail Le-Dantiu, Ilia Zdanevich and his brother Kiril came across Pirosmanashvili's work while visiting Tblisi. They were attracted to the spontaneity of his work as well as to the naïve nature of his painting, and they brought a number of his works back to Russia. The avant-garde, including Goncharova and Larionov, collected his works. Indeed, Larionov hoped to travel to the Caucasus and have his portrait painted by "the *kinto* Nikolai," but instead was called for military training.[77] Four of Pirosmanashvili's canvases were included in the Target exhibition of March 1913. Larionov gave an interview in preparation for this event, and he described Pirosmanashvili as, "A Georgian from Tiflis [Tblisi], very popular with people there as a skilful wall painter who mainly decorates taverns.... His distinctive manner, his Eastern motifs and the few means by which he achieves so much are so magnificent."[78]

Like Pirosmanashvili, Goncharova and Larionov also concerned themselves with ordinary subjects, real scenes of everyday life in their

---

[77] *Kinto* translates from Georgian as a fruit hawker. The term is also is also used to refer to colourful individuals of the down and out, such as a foul mouth cheat, pimp and performer of bawdy songs. Larionov referred to Pirosmanashvili as "the *kinto* Nikolai" in a letter to Le-Dantiu and Zdanevich. M.F. Larionov, Letter to Mikhail Le-Dantiu and Ilia Zdanevich, spring 1913, f. 135, ed. kh. 3–4, Archive of the State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg. See Povelikhina and Kovtun, *Russian Painted Shop Signs*, p. 74.

works. But while the combination of a primitivist style with low subject matter was acceptable in the paintings of the naïve Georgian artist, it became confrontational when put into practice and exhibited by trained artists such as Goncharova and Larionov.

Given Goncharova and Larionov's advocacy of national styles, it is important to consider the native traditions that influenced these artists. As already mentioned, the artists turned to *lubki* [popular prints] as a source for their paintings (Figs 26–27).[79] Introduced to Russia in the late seventeenth century, the earliest prints depicted religious figures and scenes. By the eighteenth century the subject matter of *lubki* became increasingly secular, and with the advent of the twentieth century the range of *lubki* themes expanded to include social, political, heroic, animal and moral themes.

Originally intended for the upper classes, by the end of the eighteenth century the culture of the popular print became suitable for the lower classes.[80] Frequently used to edify the public in the social mores of society, these prints often assumed a didactic or propagandistic purpose. This print genre is an intrinsically Russian form of folk art in which the viewer is presented with a highly intelligible narrative, often relating to a historical scene. The flatness of the figures, the arbitrary colour, the high degree of stylization, the monoplanar representation which denies spatial

---

[78]F.M. "'Luchisty' (V masterkoi Larionova i Goncharovoi)," *Moskovskaia gazeta*, 7 January 1913. See Kovtun, *Mikhail Larionov, 1881–1964*, trans. by P. Williams (Bournemouth, 1998), p. 109.
[79]Shevchenko, *Neo-Primitivism*. See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, p. 46.

depth, and the blending of text and image is what drew Goncharova and Larionov to this native genre.[81] The humour of *lubki*, which ranged from parody and farce to satire, would have attracted the artists as well.[82] Moreover, much of Goncharova and Larionov's subject matter (e.g. wrestlers, soldiers and tavern scenes) also found its roots in these images.

Larionov owned a sizeable and comprehensive collection of *lubki*, many of which he included in the two exhibitions he organized in 1913 with Vinogradov.[83] The catalogue of the Icon and *Lubok* exhibition indicates that Larionov was knowledgeable about the history and production methods of popular prints, and that he was familiar with the most comprehensive study of *lubki*, Dmitrii Rovinskii's five-volume *Russian Folk Prints* [*Russkaia narodnyia kartinki*].[84]

Goncharova's essay on the Eastern *lubki* was published in the catalogue of Larionov's exhibition of Original Icon Painting and *Lubki*.[85] Goncharova focused primarily on religious themes in the *lubki* she executed, and a number of her original designs were included in this

---

[80]Dianne E. Farrell, "Laughter Transformed: The Shift from Medieval to Enlightenment Humour in Russian Popular Prints," *Russia and the World of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by R.P. Bartlett et al. (Columbus, OH, 1988), p. 164.
[81]Bowlt, "Neo-Primitivism and Russian Painting," *Burlington Magazine*, CXVI, 1974, p. 137.
[82]Farrell, "Laughter Transformed," pp. 157ff.
[83]Larionov and Vinogradov first organized the smaller *Pervaia vystavka lubkov organizovannaia D.K.* [*sic*] *Vinogradovym* [*First Exhibition of* Lubki *Organized by D.K. Vinogradov*] (Moscow, 1913). One month later Larionov's *Vystavka ikonopisnykh podlinnikov i lubkov* (Moscow, 1913) was mounted. The shows were similar in many ways: they both exhibited *lubki* from the collections of Goncharova, Larionov and Vinogradov; and both included Goncharova's original *lubki*. Larionov's preface appeared in both catalogues.
[84]D.A. Rovinskii, *Russkaia narodnyia kartinki*, 5 vols (St. Petersburg, 1881).
[85]Goncharova, "Induskii i persidskii lubok. Predislovie Natalii Goncharovoi," *Ikonopisnye podlinniki i lubki organizovznnaia M.F. Larionovym* (Moscow, 1913), pp. 11–12. Reprinted in English in Sharp, *Primitivism*, pp. 430–31.

show.[86] The prints were also displayed at the Target [*Mishen*] exhibition of 1913 as well as at the first exhibition of *lubki* organized by Vinogradov. Interestingly, Goncharova's stylized, brightly coloured *lubki* met with mixed reviews, as indicated by two articles of early 1913. In February, an anonymous reviewer in *The Voice of Moscow* stated:

> Today the exhibition of popular prints organized by N.D. Vinogradov closes. The best section of it was undoubtedly the Chinese. … The most revolting in the show are the original *lubki* done by Miss Goncharova and – Oh horror – destined to be published![87]

The following month Tugendkhold described Goncharova's *lubki* and paintings at the Target exhibition as making "the most joyful impression that I have received at the Moscow exhibitions."[88] These opposing views indicate that Goncharova's interpretations of this national art form and their inherent critique on the culture of high art represented a distinct challenge to the tastes of the critics and her audience.

Neo-primitivist artists were also inspired by caricatures, a tradition that developed in Russia later than in the West (Fig. 146). Prior to the nineteenth century the only attempts at satirizing the government were through iconographic and literary means, which resulted in *lubki* that appeared crude to the Western or educated eye.[89] Bowlt relates the sharpness and clarity of later caricatures to the influence of the *lubok*; they

---

[86]In his 1913 inventory of Goncharova's works Eganburi lists six *lubki*: *The Green Serpent*, *The Pedlars*, *The Market Gardner*, *St. Barbara the Martyr*, *St. George the Victorious* and *Saints Florus and Laurus*. Eganburi, *Natalia Goncharova. Mikhail Larionov*, p. xiii. St. Barbara, currently located in the Tretiakov Gallery, is the only one of these known to exist.

[87]"Lubok," *Golos Moskvy*, 46, 24 February 1913. See Ovsiannikova, "Iz istorii pervykh vystabok lubka," p. 432.

[88]Tugendkhold, "Mosvokskie vystavki," p. 58.

synthesized a Western Neo-classical style with the linear nature and colour of this native print genre that allowed Russian caricaturists such as Ivan Terebenev and Ivan Ivanov to establish the genre during the War of 1812.[90] Many of these nineteenth-century images were based upon actual events, which meant that they could also be used for propagandistic purposes. Social satire, such as the prints of the well-known painter Aleksei Venetsianov and the work of Pavel Fedotov, also blossomed during this period.[91] After 1814, however, caricature fell into decline, and censorship regulations were tightened in 1825, which resulted in a neglect of the genre until restrictions were lifted in October 1905. It was in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War and the failed Revolution of 1905 that political and social caricature again flourished. This period witnessed the growth of a number of political satirical journals such as *Hellish Post* [*Adskaia Pochta*] and *Bugbear* [*Zhupel*] *Spectator* [*Zritel*], which attracted graphic works by Mstislav Dobuzhinskii and Evgeni Lansere. Beginning in 1911 the critic Vasilii Vereshagin began to take a scholarly interest in caricatures and published a number of articles on this subject.[92] Goncharova and Larionov were no doubt affected by the re-emergence of this genre during their own artistic and social coming of age. The crudeness of both humour and depiction, the subversive nature of these prints and their grounding in the

---

[89]Bowlt, "Art and Violence: The Russian Caricature in the Early Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Twentieth-Century Studies*, 13/14, 1975, p. 56.
[90]Ibid., p. 58.
[91]Venetsianov, *Zhurnal karikatur na 1808 god*, St. Petersburg, 1808, 1. In 1844 Fedotov produced a series of sepia drawings mocking contemporary social conventions.
[92]Vereshagin, *Russkaia karikatura I.V.F. Timm* (St. Petersburg, 1911); *Russkaia karikartua II. Otchestvennaia voina* (St. Petersburg, 1912); *Russkaia karikatura III. A.O. Orlovskii* (St. Petersburg, 1913); and *Pamyati proshlogo* (St. Petersburg, 1914).

lubok tradition were qualities that attracted the Neo-primitivists, and their influence can be seen perhaps most clearly in Larionov's soldier series.

Shevchenko also cites icon painting as a primary source of Neo-primitivism. Icons were introduced to Russia when Vladimir I was baptized a Christian in the tenth century (Fig. 16). *Parsuny*, or portrait icons, developed from the late fifteenth century onwards (Fig. 10). As early as the sixteenth century, icon painters began to supplement the traditional canonical subjects and types with complex allegories and didactic subjects.

By the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century icons became the subject of much artistic attention in Russia. Abramtsevo artists were interested in icon painting techniques. The Russian section of the 1906 *Salon d'Automne* in Paris began with icon painting. Artists were also given the opportunity to view works held in private collections. Larionov and Goncharova had their own collection of icons, and this was supplemented by Goncharova's access to a number of private collections.[93] While visiting Moscow Henri Matisse was shown a number of newly cleaned icons, an experience that he found inspirational: "It was later, before the icons in Moscow, that this art touched me and I understood Byzantine painting."[94]

---

[93]Tugendkhold, "Moskovskaia vystavka," p. 55. Gray, *The Russian Experiment,* p. 168.
[94]Matisse, "Le chemin de la couleur," *Art Présent*, 2, 1947, p. 23; Jack D. Flam, *Matisse on Art* (Berkeley, 1994), p. 116.

This artistic interest in icon painting culminated in the show Ancient Russian Painting, which featured newly cleaned icons in 1913.[95] Goncharova later told Camilla Gray that she could still remember the excitement caused by the exhibition and its long-reaching influence on Russian artists.[96] Indeed, both Goncharova and Larionov were attracted to the colour, hierarchical organization, schematized representations and abstraction inherent in these objects. Larionov explained:

> The Icons of the Russian schools are distinct from those of Greco-Byzantine ones by their graphic form, and especially by their very clear and delicate colours, by their nuances and flat application which make the surface vibrate and confer on the Russian icon an infinite profundity. The Byzantine and Greek saints are made of flesh and blood, whereas the Russian ones are not. They are the abstract symbols of another life.... The Russian icon painters were boldly led towards an important abstraction. This abstraction manifested itself in the use of schemas and pre-established formulae related to a predetermined style through which they expressed the abstract and mystical sense of life.... It is through the nuances of colour and the finesse of graphic forms that the religious and mystical state we experience when contemplating icons manifests itself.[97]

From this it is obvious that Larionov and Goncharova also found inspiration in the spirituality inherent in these objects of veneration. Indeed, Goncharova turned to icons for her peasant cycle of paintings. Together with *lubki* and primitive art forms, the icon was seen by the Neo-

---

[95]*Exhibition of Ancient Russian Art in Moscow. 1913.* [*Vystavka drevne-russkago iskusstvo v Moskve 1913g.*] (Moscow, 1913).
[96]Gray, *The Russian Experiment*, pp. 168–69.
[97]Michel Larionov [Mikhail Larionov], "Les Icônes," *Une Avant-Garde Explosive. Texts Traduits, Réunis, et Annotés par Michel Hoog et Solina de Vigneral* (Lausanne, 1978), pp. 132–33.

primitivists as "the most acute, most direct perception of life – and a purely painterly one at that."[98]

Painted shop signs were a well-known form of urban folklore (Fig. 23). Although these signs had been commonplace in Russia for centuries, they were looked at differently by twentieth-century artists who saw them as aesthetic, not just utilitarian, objects.[99] By 1904 artists started to introduce the signs in their work. Gradually realizing the full potential of these objects, they began borrowing stylistic types (figure, object, etc.) from the signs in 1907, and became increasingly vocal about this source. For example future Donkey's Tail member Sergei Bobrov included signs in his speech at the 1911 All-Russian Congress of Art. Larionov related them to the graphic arts and described them as "popular prints painted in tin."[100] He and Goncharova owned signboards and included them in the 1913 Target exhibition. Larionov also drew heavily on this tradition for his own painting, as demonstrated by *Loaves* and *Walk in a Provincial Town*.

Finally, the Neo-primitivists also took an active interest in children's art, wooden toys, costumes, lace, embroidery, wood carvings, literature and folk tales. In 1908 Kulbin discussed children's art in *Free Art as the Basis of Life* [*Svobodnoe iskusstvo kak osnova zhizni*], and an exhibition devoted exclusively to the art of children entitled Art in the Life

---

[98]Shevchenko, *Neo-primitivism*. See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, p. 46.
[99]David Burliuk, Chagall, Shevchenko and Larionov, among others, collected these signs and occasionally included them in the exhibitions they organized. Konstantin Dydyshko made a detailed study of types, colours, dimensions, locations, etc. of signboards in St. Petersburg.

of a Child was held in St. Petersburg.[101] Children's art was also included in a number of shows, including the Fifth Exhibition of Paintings organized by the New Society of Artists in 1908 and Izdebskii's salons of 1909–10 and 1911.[102] In 1911 Corrado Ricci's book *Children's Art* was translated into Russian.[103] Late in 1912 David Burliuk drew a connection between children's drawings and Larionov's works when he labelled both as exponents of free drawing, which were "in contrast to the academic canon, which sees drawing as a definite dimension [or fixed entity]."[104] Finally, Larionov included children's art in the Target exhibition he organized in early 1913.

Contemporary artists also collected children's drawings. It is likely that much of Goncharova and Larionov's own collection came from the children whom Goncharova taught in her Moscow flat.[105] She continued to do this in Paris in the 1920s.[106] According to the unpublished reminiscences of A.A. Reformatskii, Goncharova's pupils modelled

---

[100]Povelikhina and Kovtun, *Russian Painted Shop Signs and Avant-Garde Artists*, trans. by T. Crane and M. Latsinova (Leningrad, 1991), p. 64.
[101]Kulbin, "Svobodnoe iskusstvo kak osnova zhizni" (St. Petersburg, 1908). See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, pp. 13–17.
[102][*V-aia vystavka kartin Novoe obshchestvo khudozhnikov*] (St. Petersburg, 1908); *"Salon." Katalog internatsionalnoi vystavki kartin, skulptury, graviury i risunkov. Vystavka org. V. Izdebskim. Odessa i dr. goroda* (1909–10); "Salon 2" Mezhdunarodnaia khudozhestvennaia vystavka *org. V. Izdebskim* (Odessa, 1910–11); *Katalog vystavki kartin gruppy khudozhnikov "Mishen"* (Moscow, 1913).
[103]Ricci, *L'arte dei Bambini* (1887).
[104]David Burliuk, "Cubism (Surface – Plane)," *Poshcenchina obshchestvennomu vkusu* [*A Slap in the Face of Public Taste*] (Moscow, 1912). See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, p. 77.
[105]This collection was donated by Larionov's widow A.K. Tomilina-Larionova to the Tretiakov Gallery in the 1980s.
[106]Pospelov states that her style of teaching had changed and that the children's works were no longer spontaneous and untouched by the hands of the master. G.G. Pospelov, "Larionov and Children's Drawings," trans. by R. Barris, *Discovering Child Art: Essays on Childhood, Primitivism and Modernism*, ed. by J. Fineberg (Princeton, 1998), p. 53.

animals in blue clay and drew pictures with crayons or brushes.[107] It was the spontaneity and freedom of children's art that attracted Goncharova and Larionov to these works.

Children were considered to view the world in a more truthful manner than adults, which, in the wake of the 1908 New Society of Artists' exhibition, prompted the poet, critic and artist Maksimilian Voloshin to ask "Do children learn from adults, or adults from children?"[108] The Neo-primitivists were attracted by children's innocence and honesty. Indeed, in his 50s Larionov wrote in his diary that he recognized the originality of the way in which children perceive the world and that he had made a conscious decision to remain true to this:

> I recall my early childhood. Here is my idea, or really, the task, which strangely I set myself at that age of seven: 'do not forget as an adult, the humanistic sensations of childhood.' I saw the difference in the feelings of adults and children; from that this thought arose. But, unfortunately, my feelings did not change, and I do not see differences between the past and the present in my personal life. I did not lose the connection with children, but with adults I in no way am able to manage it.[109]

Pospelov suggests that children's art informed Larionov's later Neo-primitivist works of 1912–13, such as the artist's *Seasons* canvases (Figs 101–104). He argues that Larionov's primitivism of this period was oriented primarily towards what he calls infantile primitivism, and that in these canvases one encounters the artist's painterly response to impressions from children's drawings. According to Pospelov, Larionov

---

[107]A.A. Reformatskii, *Vospominaniia*, private collection, Moscow. In ibid., p. 40.
[108]Voloshin, "Vystavka detskikh risunkov," *Rus*, 76, 17 March 1908. Voloshin, *Liki tvorchestvo* (Leningrad, 1988), p. 271.

extracted technical devices such as the expressiveness of contours and line as well as symbolism from children's drawings, and these discoveries not only characterized his Neo-primitivist works of 1912–13 but were also influential to his artistic output of the 1920s and 1930s.[110]

The indigenous art forms that inspired the Neo-primitivists had their own traditions and symbols, and Goncharova and Larionov used these low art forms to challenge the academic canon. Their use of elements from the native Russian sources in conjunction with confrontational subject matter resulted in a juxtaposition of the sacred and the profane. For example, Goncharova used recognizable elements of icon painting to depict Jewish figures and Larionov used traditional means of depicting the classical nude to paint rural prostitutes. The following chapters will explore each subject in Goncharova and Larionov's thematic series of 1907–14 in detail, considering the external forces, sources and influences discussed in this chapter.

[109]Cited in Pospelov, "Larionov and Children's Drawings," p. 54. This diary was located in the collection of the artist's widow until 1977.
[110]Ibid., pp. 40, 52 and *passim*.

Chapter II
"Simple, uncorrupted people are closer to us..."[1] Larionov and Goncharova's Use of Low Subjects and Urban Themes, 1909–14

2.1 Introduction

Between 1909 and 1914 Larionov and Goncharova executed a number of paintings that feature ignoble characters and roguish antics. Although there is at present no documentary evidence to indicate that the artists intended these works to be linked as a series, these paintings can be loosely divided into two groups: those dealing with low-life, such as Gypsies and menial labourers, and those that highlight hooligans and rowdy behaviour, such as tavern scenes and images of drunken comportment.[2] Works that deal with traditionally low popular entertainments, such as the circus and the cinema, can also be included in this selection.[3]

---

[1]" We despise and brand as artistic lackeys all those who move against a background of old or new art and go about their trivial business. Simple, uncorrupted people are closer to us than this artistic husk that clings to modern art, like flies to honey." Larionov and Goncharova, " Rayists and Futurists: A Manifesto." See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, p. 89.

[2]Unlike the other bodies of work discussed in this thesis, the thematic grouping of these paintings is that of the author. Examples of Larionov's low-life themes include: *Woman Passing By*, 1909, Ulyanovsk Regional Art Museum; *The Gypsy*, 1909, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection; *The Baker*, 1909, Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection; and *Kneading Dough*, 1909, Cologne, Galerie Gmurzyrisk. Goncharova's painting *The Bread Vendor*, 1911, Moscow, State Tretiakov Gallery, is representative of the first category. Larionov's paintings included in the second group include: *Dancing*, 1909, Moscow, State Tretiakov Gallery; *Soldier's Tavern*, 1909–10, Bâle, Galerie Beyeler; *Quarrel in a Tavern*, 1911, Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection; *Quarrel in a Tavern*, 1911, Nizhnii Novgorod, State Art Museum, as well as Goncharova's *The Drunks*, 1911, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

[3]Larionov's *Circus Dancer Before Her Entrance*, 1911–12, Omsk Museum of Fine Arts; *Scene – The Cinema*, 1912, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne; and Goncharova's two versions of *Wrestlers*, 1909–10, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum and *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou are representative of the third.

The paintings in this chapter have been grouped together because they can be read as dealing with subject matter that either reflected or critiqued the urban environment that surrounded these artists. In these works, many of which can be read as urban still lives, Larionov and Goncharova turned to low subjects and urban themes to produce images that were at odds with what was then considered high art, and this in turn necessitated a re-evaluation of the hero. The artists rejected the traditional notion of heroes sanctioned by the establishment, like saints and military, political and royal figures, and they sought to redefine this whole concept by selecting outsiders in modern society. In their development of these new heroes the artists challenged the social mores integral to Russian social hierarchy and contrasted with established notions of propriety.

Some of these works, then, can be read as criticism against Russia's emerging middle class, who, unlike Goncharova and Larionov, adopted the ingrained values of society.[4] As in other countries, in Russia late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century industrialization brought with it the prospect of social mobility.[5] Many of those who benefited financially from industrialization sought entry into high society by imitating the behaviour of the old aristocracy.[6] Newly urbanized peasants

---

[4]Brooks, "Popular Philistinism and the Course of Russian Modernism," *History and Literature: Theoretical Problems and Russian Case Studies*, ed. by G.S. Morrison (Stanford, 1986), pp. 90–91; Joan Neuberger, "Stories of the Street: Hooliganism in the St. Petersburg Popular Press," *Slavic Review*, 48 (Summer 1989), pp. 179, 181–82.

[5]The number of middle-class bureaucrats grew dramatically in the second half of the nineteenth century. By the turn of the century most bureaucratic positions were held by low-ranking nobles or members of the middle class. Pamela M. Philbean, *The Middle Classes in Europe, 1789–1914: France, Germany, Italy and Russia* (London, 1990), p. 139.

[6]Neuberger, "Stories of the Street," pp. 180–182.

were often seen in their native villages promenading in expensive clothing purchased while they were working in the cities.

In his dandy paintings of 1909, Larionov critiqued the pretensions of these individuals by parodying them.[7] In his paintings they are seen parading along provincial boulevards outfitted in their most fashionable attire in an attempt to impress passers-by. In *Walk in a Provincial Town*, 1909, the figures are joined by a pig, a reminder that they are of rural origin (Fig. 11).[8] The dandies and coquettes portrayed in these works are not painted in a traditional classical or romanticized manner. Instead, they are stylistic caricatures of the predominate new middle-class pretensions, particularly visible in the central female figure who awkwardly pushes out her chest, looks at the viewer and fans herself while walking. Larionov's primitive style enhances the farcical nature of the scene because the unrefined manner in which the canvas is executed is at odds with the desired effect of the promenading folk.

2.2 Low-life and the lower professions

In his Gypsy paintings Larionov took the opposite approach from that in his dandy paintings: he used his budding Neo-primitive style to depict what was perceived as an abject social group in a dignified manner. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian literary depictions of Gypsies

---

[7]Larionov's dandy paintings include: *Walk in a Provincial Town*, 1909, Moscow, State Tretiakov Gallery; *Provincial Dandy*, 1909, Moscow, State Tretiakov Gallery; and *Provincial Coquette*, 1909, Kazan Art Museum.

[8]Interestingly, Larionov also painted *The Blue Pig* in 1909 (Fig. 12). As the title indicates, the main character of this painting is the blue pig who struts down the rural lane boasting a similar air to that of the refined ladies and gentlemen found in *Walk in a*

range from unsympathetic to generally positive, with the most negative images found in *lubok* literature.[9] The variety of portrayals include the primitive and innocent "noble savage;"[10] horse traders and superstitious fortune tellers;[11] and, in the most extreme cases, corrupt kidnappers.[12] However, Gypsies are not generally portrayed as an innately evil race. Instead, they are commonly seen as a passionate people who, like most minorities in popular literature, are easily manipulated by the Russians who inevitably triumph over them.

The Gypsy was also viewed as a symbol of a bohemian lifestyle, which is perpahs why Goncharova was proud of her Gypsy roots.[13] Marilyn R. Brown states that "the notion of the artist as an outcast bohemian was a founding tenet of Western modernism."[14] For artists like van Gogh, Gypsies represented not only a primitive lifestyle, but also the endurance of a solidarity that was absent in contemporary industrial society. In 1883 he wrote:

> … nowadays we are very far removed from the original 'Bohème,' and among painters one finds considerations of respectability which I personally do not precisely understand… Oh my dear fellow, how I wish that there was something more left in the old 'Bohème' in society and particularly among painters…[15]

Provincial Town.

[9]Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read*, p. 229.

[10]I.S. Ivin (I.S. Kassirov), *Tsygan mstitel, ili prestupnik po nevole* (Moscow, 1915).

[11]M. Evstigneev, *Stseny iz narodnogo byta raznykh stran i obshchestv* (Moscow, 1872), pp. 70–78.

[12]"Utes satana," *Gazeta koeika*, 1912. See Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read*, p. 231.

[13]Chamot, *Gonchaorva*, p. 6.

[14]Brown, *Gypsies and Other Bohemians: The Myth of the Artist in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ann Arbor, 1985), p. 3.

[15]Letter R20 from van Gogh to Anthon G.A. Ridder van Rappard, February 1883. Vincent Van Gogh, *The Complete Letters*, vol. III (London, 1958), p. 349.

Gypsies and the notion of the Bohemian also appealed to artists interested in promoting low art and culture. The German Expressionists, for example, turned to the theme of Gypsies to illustrate their myth of primitivism.[16] In Russian high culture the Gypsy was seen as a passionate noble savage.[17]

Larionov adhered to this idea of the noble savage in his portrayals of Gypsy themes. These paintings belong to a period when the artist was also painting in Western styles, so here he looked to French paintings, many of which were still fresh in his mind from his 1906 visit to Paris with Diaghilev.[18] At this time, besides being exposed to works by Cézanne, Derain, Matisse, Rousseau and Roualt that were previously unknown to him, Larionov also had the opportunity to view 227 works by Gauguin included in the retrospective exhibition at the *Salon d'Automne*. This exhibition included a number of Gauguin's Tahitian paintings.

More influential for the development of the Gypsy paintings was the 1908 Golden Fleece exhibition in Moscow already discussed in Chapter I. Aleksandr Kuprin, a colleague and friend of Larionov and Goncharova, stated that the works by Derain, Cézanne, Matisse and van Gogh exhibited at the Golden Fleece "...turned all my conceptions about colour upside down...," which resulted in "...mutiny. The old art that had

---

[16]Brown, *Gypsies and Other Bohemians*, p. 99.

[17]Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read*, p. 229.

[18]In 1909, Larionov began to depict figures and objects in more monumental terms. His figures now filled the canvas and he began to use bold contours and colours. Black also infiltrated his palette. By 1910 he began to explore the possibilities of geometric volumes. He simplified his drawing style and he boldly delineated the figures and objects in his paintings. His use of colour also changed. He now worked with large planes of colour which, in addition to building form, he employed for emotive purposes. He often

turned sour on us was radically rejected."[19] The exhibition, no doubt, affected Larionov and Goncharova similarly, as evidenced by their change in style.

Prior to the Golden Fleece exhibition Larionov and Goncharova were still working in symbolist and impressionist styles.[20] Larionov's work of 1908 is characterized by light brushwork and harmonious colour relationships. The lyrical brushstrokes lack the coarseness of his later paintings. His palette is lighter, dominated by bright, pure reds, yellows, oranges, greens and peaches, and the objects are modelled by light (e.g. *Pigs*, 1908). After his exposure to the French models, his works became more monumental, with solid forms, strong contours and a bold approach to both modelling and colour. In 1909 Larionov and Goncharova participated in the second Golden Fleece exhibition. Here, works by a number of the same Western artists were displayed, which kept the Russians informed of the latest French trends. These developments found form in Larionov's Gypsy paintings.

Similar to Gauguin in his Tahitian works, Larionov endowed his Gypsy women with a sense of dignity. In *Noa Noa* Gauguin emphasized that his contact with the "savages" purified and rejuvenated his overly civilized soul: "Here was I, a civilized man, distinctly inferior in these things to the savages."[21] His canvases may be considered the product of a sophisticated and modern individual from a position of conscious

---

used murky, blended colours in order to depict dirty, abject surroundings.

[19]See K.S. Kravchenko, *A.V. Kuprin* (Moscow, 1973), p. 58.

[20]Larionov's works at this exhibition were limited to bathers and landscapes, and Goncharova's subject matter consisted primarily of nature and street scenes.

superiority who interpreted their way of life as primitive and innocent. Accordingly, he focused on the superstitions and innate passions of these people, utilizing idealized exotic types.

Larionov's Gypsy paintings, which depict those Gypsies he had seen in his hometown of Tiraspol, are for the most part similar to Gauguin's in their sculptural form and palette, as well as in his adherence to decorative abstraction and the expressive quality of colour. Larionov's women are more immediate, however. They are monumental, pushed to the forefront of the picture plane and presented not as exotic females from a far away land, but as accessible women found in the Russian Empire.

Woman Passing By, 1909, is set in a rural environment, most likely Tiraspol (Fig. 13). In this painting a woman wearing a red garment is presented frontally and close to the picture plane. A kercheif is draped around her head and she secures it with her right hand. Her left elbow is bent and her left wrist falls limply in front of her. The angular landscape behind her shows a deep spatial recession. A sleeping dog lies behind the woman on her left, and a figure is seen engaged in some sort of rural labour to the rear. A male figure stands to the woman's right. She is unaware of his presence as he stares out at her.[22]

The bright red colour and abstract patterns on the woman's costume are similar to those in Gauguin's paintings, like *Woman with Fruit* [*Eu Haere ia oe*], 1893, and *Sacred Spring* [*Nave Nave Moe*], 1894,

---

[21]Gauguin, *Noa Noa*, trans. by O.F. Theis (London, 1961), pp. 28, 51 and *passim*.
[22]Parton, *Larionov*, p. 22, believes that the Gypsy is a woman Larionov observed in Tiraspol. Bowlt and Misler agree with this interpretation. See Bowlt and Nicoletta Misler, *The Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection. Twentieth-Century Russian and East*

both located in the Morozov collection by the time Larionov painted this work (Figs 14–15).[23] As in Gauguin's paintings, Larionov's female figure is depicted in a natural setting. However, while Gauguin placed his idealized Tahitian beauties in an idyllic landscape, both Larionov's Gypsy woman and the surrounding landscape are less exotic. Also, in Gauguin's painting there is a lyrical quality, achieved through his use of colour harmonies and fluid lines, that is absent in Larionov's painting where a more severe angularity predominates.

It is not known whether Larionov visited Pablo Picasso's studio while he was in Paris for the 1906 Salon, but by 1909 he and Goncharova were clearly aware of the artist from their visits to Shchukin's collection. This familiarity is demonstrated by elements in this painting: the angularity of the woman's nose, the austere lighting of her face and the stylized depiction of her garment are similar to those found in Picasso's works in Russia at the time, such as *The Old Jew*, 1903, *Woman with a Fan*, 1908, and *Nude in the Forest (The Great Dryad)*, 1908. Later evidence exists that both Larionov and Goncharova were interested in the formal innovations expressed in Picasso's works, many of which Shchukin brought to Moscow almost immediately upon completion. In April 1910, for example, Goncharova corrected those who referred to her work as Impressionistic and aligned herself with the Cubists:

> And as regards my manner, – in no way should it be called Impressionistic, as it has been called in the papers. Impressionism is after all, the transmission of the first,

European Painting (New York and London, 1993), p. 174.

[23]Morozov acquired both works in 1908.

> often unclear, obscure impression. I, on the other hand, like the newest French artists (Le Fauconnier, Braque, Picasso) attempt to attain concrete form, sculptural clarity and simplified line, the depth and not the brilliance of colours.[24]

Another source for Larionov's work is icon painting. The woman's garment, her scarf, the tilt of her head and the angularity of her face, are similar to motifs found in traditional icon portrayals of the Madonna, such as *The Virgin Hodegetria of Georgia*, from the first half of the sixteenth century (Fig. 16). In this icon the Virgin demurely tilts her veiled head and presses her garment with her right hand. Her left arm bends to support the Christ Child. These elements recur in *Woman Passing By*, except that her left arm is now empty and her hand instead points downward.

While Larionov's *Woman Passing By* seemingly depicts a slice of everyday life, *The Gypsy*, 1909, is visually and thematically disturbing (Fig. 17). The woman here is portrayed in monumental terms at the forefront of the picture plane. In this instance, however, she is shown in three-quarter length. While she strides towards the right, she looks out towards the viewer. In her left hand she carries a container that has been cut off by the edge of the canvas. A child runs after her. The background is predominately yellow and occupied by two dogs chasing an oversized pig, the leg of a striding figure and a man seated at the front of a dwelling.[25]

---

[24]" Beseda s N.S. Goncharovoi," p. 3.

[25]In the background to the left of the Gypsy and behind the barnyard animals is the leg of a striding figure who appears to be wearing a soldier's boot. It is possible that Larionov included this feature as a representative of the Tsarist State. If so, then This canvas can also be read in relation to the prevailing Russian cultural norms that were imposed upon the nations of the Empire. In his native Tiraspol, the setting for this painting, both

The woman is portrayed topless, with a vermilion garment covering the lower half of her body, suggested by the drapery folds under her right elbow. Her sagging breasts fall over the garment. This is clearly not a classical nude, but a crude depiction in which vermilion, ochre, blue and pink delineate the greenish tone used for her flesh. Larionov echoed these tones in the rural setting, animals and child, to unify the composition stylistically and symbolically.

The gypsy seems unashamed of her nakedness, as confirmed by her unabashed gaze, which meets that of the viewer.[26] The boy who toddles after, also naked and clumsily represented, is obviously distressed. Here. Larionov's representation of mother and child is the complete antithesis of the *Our Lady of Tenderness* tradition where the Virgin comforts her Son (Fig. 18).

The Gypsy provides a great contrast with Gauguin's *Woman with Fruit* [*Eu Haere ia oe*], 1893. Both artists used an expressive, primitive style in which figures and objects were formed by planes of saturated colour. In each painting the principal figure, in three-quarter length, stands in front of a busy background and is set apart from the other characters by means of scale. Both women are seen in three-quarter view, and, although each meets the viewer's gaze, Larionov's Gypsy stares out more aggressively. Larionov's background is dominated by vertical lines for the angular foliage, not the sinuous lines of Gauguin's decorative setting.

Larionov and the Gypsies lived under the dominance of the Great Russians, represented and enforced by the military.

[26]Christina Lodder suggests that the bare breasts also signify the woman's freedom from Russian conventions and emphasize her position as an outsider.

Also, Larionov's gypsy is not a sensual erotic nude situated in a lush paradise, but a figure depicted in harsh and unnatural colours, in an non-idealized setting.

Woman with Fruit [*Eu Haere ia oe*] symbolizes prolificacy. The green fruit held by the Tahitian woman is a symbol of fertility and the continuity of life, as supported the woman carrying a child in the background. In Larionov's painting the Gypsy's exposed breasts, the child and the vessel can be seen as also demonstrating the woman's fertility. As a symbol of the uterus, the vessel carries with it associations of fertility and nurturing.[27] Larionov's Gypsy woman is not in keeping with the conventional depiction of the peasant woman in nature as nurturer, such as in Venetsianov's *Harvesting: Summer*, before 1827 (Fig. 19). Her pronounced nipples suggest that she is breast-feeding the toddler behind her. This emphasis on the nipples becomes obvious when compared with his contemporary bathers, such as *Country Bathers*, 1910 (Fig. 20). The Gypsy's breasts are exposed, but the child is not feeding on them. The distressed manner in which the toddler chases after the woman suggests that, although a fertile woman, she is not an attentive mother, which negates the nurturing nature of the woman and her breasts. Her exposed breasts may also suggest sexual emancipation, and perhaps even prostitution.

The seated male figure in the background of this painting appears to be drawing or writing, and he perhaps represents Larionov himself. If

[27]Francis Frascina, "Realism and Ideology: an Introduction to Semiotics and Cubism,"

so, then he, like Gauguin, would have recorded his own presence among these "simple, uncorrupted people."[28] Larionov likely included himself in these works to make the connection between the avant-garde artist and the social outsider. This practice is similar to Aubrey Beardsley's observations of himself within his prostitute paintings.[29] By depicting himself in this work and in *Woman Passing By*, Larionov invoked the notion of the artist as bohemian.

To Larionov and Goncharova, Gauguin succeeded in advancing the cause of art by experiencing the primitive. Goncharova explained this accordingly:

> The foreign must merge with the native. This is the only way to create the upsurge that is necessary to propel art forward. Paul Gauguin was not just a Naturalized Tahitian, at the same time, he was not just a Frenchman. He was a cultured Frenchman who attained that which was foreign to him, the Primitive culture of the Tahitian.[30]

Likewise, Larionov merged the civilized with the primitive by including himself among these noble savages. He was a "cultured" artist who, through the adulteration of acceptable subject matter and means of representation, attempted to transcend established social boundaries and present "that which was foreign to him." The sheer coarseness of these works separated Larionov's painting from the lyrical nature of Gauguin's Tahitian beauties, and his middle-class audience found these works more shocking that those of the Frenchman.

Primitivism, Cubism, Abstraction: The Early Twentieth Century, ed. by C. Harrison et al. (London, 1993), p. 88.

[28]Op. cit.

[29]I thank Jeremy Howard for pointing this out to me.

[30]Goncharova, " [Press Statement on the All-Russian Congress of Artists]," p. 4. See

The setting in which Larionov placed these figures enhances the radical qualities of these works. Unlike Gauguin, Larionov did not situate his figures within an idyllic landscape. His settings are not tranquil, but impoverished rural areas near Tiraspol. In *Woman Passing By* the angularity of the brushstrokes indicates a gradient surface. Instead of rolling hills Larionov presented the viewer with an empty expanse. Forest shrubbery, indicated by broad planes of colour, act simply as a foil to set off the figures in the foreground. In *The Gypsy*, Larionov set his figures against a desolate yellow landscape, which is dry and barren with clouds of dust and little suggestion of foliage.

Larionov's Gypsies can be seen as victims of modernization. He painted *Woman Passing By* and *The Gypsy* a decade after he left the south for Moscow, and these canvases, which seem to include his own image, can be read as a transition from the rural to the urban. In these paintings he turned to Tiraspol for images of noble savages to contradict the pretensions of the urban culture he witnessed in Moscow.

The exaggerated coarseness found in the Gypsy paintings can also be seen in Larionov and Goncharova's scenes depicting bakers and bread vendors. Larionov's *The Baker* and *Kneading Dough*, both of 1909, and Goncharova's *The Bread Vendor*, 1911, focus upon menial labour, with Larionov's heroes now located in an urban setting (Figs 21, 25 and 28). These crude depictions do not serve to glorify the subjects or these professions as do the paintings from Goncharova's peasant series, such as

---

Sharp, *Primitivism*, pp. 424–25.

Washing Linen, 1910 (Fig. 127). Instead, they illustrate drudgery in stark terms.

Larionov's *The Baker*, 1909, focuses on a lone figure working in a red-hot setting, with an open fire burning in the background (Fig. 21). The stifling heat of the scene is expressed by the thick vermilion and various hues of red, orange and blue aggressively applied to the canvas. Bowlt and Misler suggest that baking bread is also an activity symbolizing primitive cultures, and that the "raw force and primitive energy" of the painting may indicate a celebration of Vulcan and the cult of fire.[31] However, it seems more plausible to interpret this work as a sympathetic depiction of the working class.

Signboard painting is no doubt the source for this scene. The loaves, the end product of the labourer's toil, are featured prominently in the foreground, as they are in signboards, the purpose of which was to illustrate the merchandise attractively so that the (often illiterate) passers-by would be tempted to purchase them.

Larionov displayed a keen interest in signboards, often including this form of urban folklore in his own work, such as *Walk in a Provincial Town* where the shop sign is present as part of the scenery. In *Loaves*, 1910, he borrowed both subject matter and composition from bakery signs (Fig. 22).[32] As illustrated by the *Bread and Grocery Shop Sign*, the traditional composition for these is two long loaves of bread placed on a

---

[31]Bowlt and Misler, *The Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection*, pp. 176 and 178.

[32]An early version of *Loaves* is reproduced in Eganburi, 1913. Larionov later overpainted the canvas in Paris.

vertical axis with three round loaves in between to form a triangle (Fig. 23). Within this triangle are other various goods prepared by the bakery. In *Loaves* Larionov used a similar pyramidal composition. However, while the shop sign functions as an identifying logo, Larionov transformed his scene into a still life by placing the bread on a table, above a cloth and adding a bottle, curtain and other such elements.

Maksimilian Voloshin cited this painting in his review of the first Knave of Diamonds exhibition, stating that:

> Larionov is one of the most naïve and artless of the 'Knaves.' His *Loaves* is really just bread which, if it had been painted on a tin sign would have made any bakery happy.[33]

Although Voloshin felt compelled to point out Larionov's lack of academicism, he also proclaimed that in spite of the popularity of these painted signboards amongst the Knave of Diamonds group, none of Larionov's fellow artists could rival his mastery of the genre.

The substance of Voloshin's comments can be seen when comparing Larionov's *Loaves* to Ilia Mashkov's 1912 painting of the same name (Fig. 24). Mashkov flattened the pyramidal composition and included a floral pattern in the background, the colour of which is reflected on the stacked rolls on the right side of the canvas. But in spite of this floral background, Mashkov's is an undefined space and his composition is not as unified as Larionov's. Larionov, on the other hand, utilized the triangular arrangement and economy of details of signboards to create a fully developed scene.

Larionov strayed further from the traditional standardized representation of signboards in *The Baker*. Although the wares are the central focus of this painting, also included is the manufacturer of these goods: the baker. By depicting the actual labourer, Larionov changed the scene from still life to narrative. In addition, he used colour more expressively and utilized clearly manifest brushwork.

In *Kneading Dough*, 1909, Larionov presented the viewer with a shirtless, barefoot male figure with his back to the viewer as he leans over a vat of dough to knead (Fig. 25). He looks over his right shoulder and meets the viewer's gaze. To his left stands a second male, in profile and also barefoot, who, unaware of the viewer, watches his companion work. An oven is suggested on the far wall behind the vat of dough, and a scale or perhaps a sifter hangs to the right of the oven.

This painting is grounded not on signboards but in the *lubok* tradition. The sixteenth-century print *Preparing Flour, Baking* equates the preparation of flour and the baking of bread with an act of Christian devotion, and it documents the appointment of Sergius as Abbot in recognition of his painstaking labour in baking the bread used in the sacrament (Fig. 26). Its caption reads:

> Every day he performed the liturgy standing and himself baked the communion loaves, pounded and ground the wheat, sifted the flour, mixed the dough and soured it.

In *Kneading Dough* a similar reference to the Eucharist may exist. The huge tub used for kneading resembles a coffin with its lid ajar, and it

---

[33]Voloshin, "Bubnovyi valet," *Apollon*, 1, 1911, p. 12.

is possible that Larionov was using this combination of elements to also symbolize Christ's sacrifice, while at the same time conveying the arduous nature of the manual labour. This crudely rendered setting is far removed from the reverent scene of the sixteenth-century print, however, as these loaves will not be consumed as an act of worship. Further, it is the misery of the kneader and the toil of his task that is stressed by his grimace and his state of undress which, in addition to exhibiting impiety, raises the issue of cleanliness.

The proximity of this idle man's right hand in relation to the kneader's posterior seems to stem from images like that of the couple in the popular eighteenth-century print *The Pancake Vendor*, 1760s (Fig. 27). In the *lubok* the sexually suggestive grouping of the pair is complimented by the accompanying text in which the woman threatens to club the man if he does not remove his hand from her bottom.[34] Larionov seems to have debased the playful humour of the original print by altering the gender of the kneader.

Goncharova's *The Bread Vendor*, 1911, is another interesting blend of still life and narrative painting (Fig. 28). The work portrays a peasant woman selling bread at an outdoor stall. The artist divided the canvas into two. On the left is a still life depicting the vendor's wares, and the right is occupied by the peasant, who is represented in monumental terms. While the vertical stall-post physically separates the two scenes, the woman's hands, resting upon one of the loaves, act as a unifying element.

---

[34]For a translation of the text, see R.E.F. Smith and David Christian, *Bread and Salt: A*

Goncharova also turned to shop sign painting and *lubok* prints as sources for this representation. However, her composition is not pyramidal as those on bakery signs. She, like Larionov, filled the rest of the space with objects like the drapery and the basket, not found in the traditional genre. Through the voluminous curtain, which is similar to the textiles depicted in *Still life with Pineapple*, *ca.* 1908, and *Cat with a Tray*, 1910–11, she demonstrated her technical mastery of the medium (Figs 29–30).

The angularity of the figure in this painting and the tree that frames her were taken directly from *lubki*, as were her monumental nature and the schematic leaves behind her.[35] These elements can also be found in icon painting.

The woman in *The Bread Vendor* is non-idealized. Her features are rough and exaggerated. Her sagging breasts are more pronounced than those in Goncharova's earlier representations of peasant women, possibly enhanced to suggest nourishment, the role of this vendor in society. She is the modern, urban equivalent of the nourishing rural peasant as seen in Venetsianov's work.

Since bread is a symbol of Christ, this vendor can be seen as both a physical and a spiritual nurturer. However, a depressed mood is conveyed by her expression, and her misery suggests that Goncharova sought to comment on the morose reality of this low profession. This is the vendor's lot in life, one which Goncharova portrayed in less than idyllic terms.

Social and Economic History of Food and Drink in Russia (Cambridge, 1984), p. 223.

[35]Goncharova used schematized foliage repeatedly in her Neo-primitivist works, including the version of *Portrait of Larionov and His Platoon Commander*, 1911, currently located at the Pompideu Centre (Fig. 31).

2.3 Hooligans and hooliganism

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there existed a general sentiment among the upper classes that favoured the education of those in the lower echelons of society to instil in them "the knowledge, the moral ideals and the rules of a reasoned society."[36] A group existed, however, that was unwilling to accept these cultural gifts. These hooligans, as they were commonly known, defiantly asserted their own culture.[37] The term hooligan was also applied to fine art. At the 1908 Link exhibition in Kiev, for example, the Wanderers were referred to as "hooligans of the palette."[38] Pospelov argues that because of their choice of name, the Knave of Diamonds artists would have been associated with hooligans, swindlers or criminals.[39]

Industrialization in Russia resulted in greater contact between members of differing social strata. The escalating displacement of people from the country to the city brought with it a host of social problems, including a great swell in the number of the poor who could no longer be contained in the urban ghettos and who therefore filtered into areas traditionally reserved for the upper classes.[40] As a result, an increasing

---

[36]See Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read*, pp. 111–123.

[37]The term hooliganism filtered into Russian by the turn of the century and was in common usage by 1905. Neil B. Weissman, "Rural Crime in Tsarist Russia: The Question of Hooliganism, 1905–1914," *Slavic Review*, 37, 1978, p. 228; Laura Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Russia* (Ithaca, 1992), p. 266.

[38]David Burliuk, "The Voice of an Impressionist." See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, p. 11.

[39]Pospelov, *Bubnovyi valet*, pp. 99–102.

[40]Neuberger, "Stories of the Street," pp. 183, 188–89.

number of individuals refused to remain submissive to those socially above them, which gave rise to hooliganism.

Hooliganism was characterized by an attack on the bourgeoisie through defiant behaviour, including street crimes, and a rejection to the bourgeois attempt to force lower class assimilation into society.[41] By 1905 hooliganism was seen as a grave social problem and as "a sign of urban social disintegration and a symbol of the 'degeneracy' and 'danger' of the urban lower classes."[42]

Poor young men were the primary perpetrators of hooliganism, with crimes ranging from innocuous public exploits meant to annoy or mock honourable pedestrians to more threatening offences meant to humiliate them, few of which actually posed a great physical threat to the victim. One contemporary journalist defined this phenomenon as the "illegal, malicious assault on life, health, honour or property of another person, unprovoked by the victim and not inspired by the expectation of personal gain."[43]

The antics preferred by the hooligans were those guaranteed to attract and shock an audience. The streets became their theatre, with the success of a prank determined by the drama of the performance and the subsequent public reaction. The exaggeration of impudent behaviour, such as public drunkenness, swearing, whistling, singing and shouting loudly (especially in female company), and brawling with fellow hooligans, were

---

[41]Ibid., p. 178; Weissman, "Rural Crime in Tsarist Russia," pp. 228–30.
[42]Neuberger, "Stories of the Street," p. 177.
[43]"Khuliganstvo," *Novoe vremia*, 13318, 9 April 1913, p. 4. See Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, p. 266.

the most successful means of securing a response.[44] Other activities, such as blocking streets and sidewalks; loosening screws on park benches and laughing boisterously from nearby bushes when the unsuspecting dupe fell to the ground; throwing cups of tea at pedestrians in front of a well-known tea shop on St. Petersburg's fashionable Sadovia Street; and releasing a nest of wasps in the carriage of a crowded train, were more overtly confrontational as the threats were more physical. These incidents were relatively harmless, but they left the public feeling that the hooligans now controlled the streets.

Hooligans were seen as an affront to all that was good, as individuals who specifically set out to overstep the firmly entrenched boundaries of taste and behaviour, and used objectionable behaviour as a means of attacking authority. The preponderance of news coverage in both St. Petersburg and Moscow indicates that hooliganism was in fact perceived as a great threat to respectability in pre-Revolutionary Russia, and advanced by a fear of the lower classes.

Larionov and Goncharova would certainly have read about these incidents in contemporary papers such as *The Moscow Gazette* [*Moskovskaia gazeta*], *The Moscow Newspaper* [*Moskovskii listok*], *The St. Petersburg Gazette* [*Peterburgskii gazeta*] and *The St. Petersburg Newspaper* [*Peterburgskii listok*], which were aimed at an urban audience.

---

[44]There were many hooliganish antics, such as pulling girl's ribbons, whispering obscenities in their ears and thrusting pornographic material in front of their faces, geared specifically towards female audiences. For the factors that made women seem like an especially suitable target and the effect of this threat on society see Neuberger, "Culture Besieged: Hooliganism and Futurism," *Cultures in Flux: Lower-Class Values, Practices and Resistance in Late Imperial Russia*, ed. by S.P. Frank and M.D. Steinberg (Princeton,

These popular dailies regularly featured factual reports and anecdotal accounts of crime, city low-life and scandals, and many of the non-fictional chronicles were sensationalized for greater effect. Both Goncharova and Larionov were the subject of reviews and articles published in these papers, and it is extremely unlikely that these reports would have escaped their attention. Moreover, their knowledge of hooliganism seems certain when one considers that they turned to comparable forms of uncivilized behaviour to advance their own cause, like face painting, radical art exhibitions and Futurist evenings at clubs like the Stray Dog Cabaret in St. Petersburg that were confrontational.[45]

Larionov and Ilia Zdanevich published the manifesto "Why We Paint Ourselves: A Futurist Manifesto" in the conservative journal *Argus* in December 1913.[46] Although Larionov and Zdanevich are listed as the only two authors, photographs of Goncharova and Le-Dantiu with painted faces included alongside the declaration indicate their involvement. These artists turned their bodies into canvases and translated their convictions into standards of personal behaviour and dress that broke ties with established manners and customs.[47] In taking this to the public they hoped to confront polite society as did the hooligans.

1994), p. 190.

[45]Popular cabarets in Moscow included The Bat, The Blue Bird and The Pink Lantern; The Crooked Mirror, The House of Interludes and The Stray Dog were amongst the most successful pre-Revolutionary cabarets in St. Petersburg. See Harold Segal, *Turn-of-the Century Cabaret* (New York, 1987), pp. 225–320 and Bowlt "Cabaret in Russia," *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 19, 1985, pp. 443–63.

[46]Zdanevich and Larionov, "Pochemu my raskrashivaemsya: manifest futuristov [Why We Paint Ourselves: A Futurist Manifesto]," *Argus* (St. Petersburg), 1913, pp. 114–18. See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, pp. 79–82.

[47]They were not the only ones to do this. Mayakovskii, for example, wore a bright yellow coat and Malevich used a wooden spoon as a boutonnière.

This is evidenced by Larionov and Zdanevich's manifesto:

> Our self-painting is the first speech to have found unknown truths. And the conflagrations caused by it show that the menials of the earth have not lost the hope of saving the old nests, have gathered all forces to the defence of the gates, have crowded together knowing that with the first goal scored we are the victors.[48]

By the "old nests" they obviously meant society's traditions and academicism as well.

The language used in the manifesto is aggressive and confrontational. The artists refer to themselves as "fighters," and claim:

> Tattooing doesn't interest us. People tattoo themselves once and for always. We paint ourselves for an hour, and a change of experience calls for a change of painting…
> Facial expressions don't interest us. That's because people have grown accustomed to understanding them, too timid and ugly as they are. Our faces are like the screech of the trolley warning hurrying passers-by, like drunken sounds of the great tango....
> Mutiny against the earth and transformation of faces into a projector of experiences.…
> We paint ourselves because a clean face is offensive, because we want to herald the unknown, to rearrange life, and to bear man's multiple soul to the upper reaches of reality.[49]

Publication of such a manifesto in a conservative journal like *Argus* indicates not only that it was intended to reach the bourgeoisie, but also that there was sufficient interest amongst readers to warrant publication.

"Our [face] painting is the newsman," declared Larionov and Zdanevich, conveying that they used this art form to bring their cause to the people, and demonstrating the importance of the contemporary press

---

[48]Zdanevich and Larionov, "Pochemu my raskrashivaemsya." See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde* p. 81.
[49]Ibid., pp. 82–83.

as a means of disseminating information.[50] Their choice of language can also be linked to the dominance of reportage on hooliganism in the media. The artists harnessed the fear of danger in the streets, as expressed in phrases such as "the screech of a trolley warning hurrying passers-by." There is also talk of combat, with face painting as "the beginning of the invasion."[51]

Like the hooligans, the artists took this practice to the streets. In September 1913 Larionov arrived at *Kuznetskii Most*, a fashionable street containing luxurious shops, restaurants and banks, with a painted face. Larionov and Goncharova also frequented the Pink Lantern cabaret with their faces painted; they were known to paint the faces of obliging audience members as well.

When Larionov and Zdanevich visited the editor of *Theatre in Caricatures* [*Teatr karrikaturakh*] in order to assert their new system of Rayist face painting, the journal reported the events of this meeting as follows:[52]

> The editor's office has had some original visitors.
> M.F. Larionov, the prophet of the Futurists; and I. Zdanevich, the lecturer on Futurism. Faces painted with

---

[50]Larionov and Zdanevich wanted to reach as wide of an audience as possible. The full statement reads, "Tattooing is beautiful but it says little – only about one's tribe and exploits. Our painting is the newsman." Ibid., p. 82.

[51]They further stated, "The dawn's hymn to man, like a bugler before the battle, calls to victories over the earth, hiding itself beneath the wheels until the hour of vengeance; the slumbering weapons have awoken and spit on the enemy.
The new life requires a new community and a new way of propagation.
Our self-paintings is the first speech to have found unknown truths. And the conflagrations caused by it show that the menials of the earth have not lost hope of saving the old nests, have gathered all forces to the defence of the gates, have crowded together knowing that with the first goal scored we are the victors." Ibid., p. 81.

[52]The fact that the press reported these incidents in such an engaging manner demonstrates that there certainly existed an interest amongst the readers.

> fanciful patterns, a rapid and impetuous way of talking, a particular kind of nervousness, but, nonetheless, a sense of concentration and seriousness.
> 'We have come to tell you,' says Larionov, 'of the latest sensation in the field of Paris fashions. We Futurists are better understood and appreciated abroad. Certain actresses have introduced the fashion of powdering themselves with brown powder and of circling their eyes with green pencil. The result is very nice and original...'
> 'Downright exotic!' Our editor interrupts.
> Really indignant and annoyed, Larionov turns his gaze to the speaker and goes on: 'Just let me explain the meaning of our tattooing.'
> The prophet takes a piece of chalk and makes an incomprehensible hieroglyph on the face of his interlocutor.
> 'What's that?' – one of the office workers just has to speak up.
> 'A tango,' says Larionov, 'get that now?'
> All of the editorial staff try to adopt the expression of smart, really bright guys and nod their heads in agreement.
> 'A tango, well, okay. I am not an expert in dancing,' the editor seethes. 'So what the hell?'
> 'Would you like me to paint all of you?' the Futurist artist continues.
> The oldest member of the editorial staff jumps up nervously and, deeply offended, announces: 'I have grown children. I've married my five daughters and my sons are in the civil service.' The Futurists take their bows. Several days have now passed since then, but the editor's office still has not fathomed Larionov's 'tango.'
> Help us readers![53]

The aged editor's response is as important as Larionov's performance. Face painting may have been an acceptable means of expression for Larionov and his young, radical contemporaries, but not for a man with a respectable family of civil servants. Sometimes referred to as "the hidden third estate," civil servants were known for their support of the Tsar and his policies, and could be seen as symbols of the autocracy.[54] The

---

[53]" Poslednii krik Parizhskoi mody. Ubezhdennye grimasniki" in *Teatr v karrikaturakh*, Moscow, 14, 8 December, 1913, p. 14; Bowlt, "Mikhail Larionov, a Conjurer of Colored Dust," *Mikhail Larionov*, exh. cat. (Stockholm, 1987), pp. 70–74.
[54]Philbeam, *The Middle Classes in Europe*, pp. 135–42.

distinguished gentleman expressed horror at Larionov's suggestion that he participate in such uncivilized behaviour, and I would suggest that it is precisely this reaction that Larionov sought from the viewers of his "hooligan" paintings.

The ironic tone used in the report was obviously meant to mock the prophet Larionov and his avant-garde associates. After Larionov is interrupted by one of the editors who labels the practice of face painting as "Downright exotic!", the artist's response is described as both "indignant and annoyed." The compliment is almost certainly tongue-in-cheek. Larionov, like the hooligans before him, is nonetheless portrayed as a contentious rogue. The feature ends with an appeal for readers to help decipher the events, intended to establish a dialogue with them on a controversial topic to increase circulation. This plea for public involvement would have suited Larionov as it elicited the interest of his proposed audience and furthered his carefully cultivated reputation as an artistic hooligan. The press coverage indicates that Larionov was indulged in this desire.

The tabloids, then, played an integral part in promoting Larionov's activities and the events that he organized. Events were advertised by the artists and the ruckus behaviour was duly reported.[55] Advance rumours were leaked to the press to stimulate interest and increase ticket sales. The artists used these evenings as a platform for broadcasting their latest developments, which subsequently appeared in the papers. Like the

[55]Just as the hooligans had thrown tea at pedestrians passing a tea shop, Khlebnikov

hooligans, the avant-garde had a symbiotic relationship with the press, as the reputations of both were cultivated in the media. But while both groups enjoyed the press coverage given to them, the avant-garde artists manipulated the press to ensure that their antics were reported, an option unavailable to lower-class hooligans.

The artists were criticized for their unrelenting pursuit of scandal: In a review of the Knave of Diamonds exhibition Sergei Momontov wrote of the artists of the "extreme left:"

> They change the mottoes of their exhibitions and find even newer ways of realizing them, bringing to the public an annual succession of scandals, which creates a sensation, but only for its own sake.[56]

Here Mamontov clearly referred to Larionov's choice of the name Knave of Diamonds and implied that the success of these challenges depended upon the interaction between the artists and their audience.

The importance of this relationship is exemplified by the Target debate of 1913. A fight broke out during Zdanevich's speech when he compared the *Venus de Milo* to a modern, factory-produced boot and declared the boot more beautiful. Zdanevich, Larionov and others were dragged away by police and it was rumoured that as the chair of the event,

---

threw tea on officers in the front row of The First Evening of the Speech-Creators, held at the Moscow Society of Art Lovers on 13 October 1913.

[56]Mamontov, "Bubnovyi valet," *Russloe slovo*, 15 December 1910, p. 6.

Larionov might go to prison.[57] Zdanevich wrote that he was "happy with the scandal because it is the necessary advertising."[58]

Members of the bourgeoisie were crucial to the success of the Stray Dog Cabaret as well.[59] Here, too, they were willing participants as they were curious about the bohemian behaviour of the avant-garde, whom they wanted to encounter in their own environment.[60] Visitors to the Stray Dog were categorized either as "representatives of art" or as "pharmacists," a blanket term applied to "...everybody else no matter what profession they followed."[61] Pronin, one of the club's owners and a member of the avant-garde, "fleeced new guests of whatever sum came into his head."[62] He forced them to wear paper hats and insisted that all guests participate. Livshits reports that "illustrious lawyers or members of the State Duma,

---

[57]Zdanevich, Letter to his mother, 20 March 1912. Archives of the State Russian Museum, Fond 177, op. 50, ed. kh. 16. See Kovtun, *Mikhail Larionov*, p. 91. For Larionov's explanation of events, see "Oni ne khoteli skandala (obiasneniia ustroitelei disputa 'Mishen')," *Moskovskaia gazeta*, 23 March 1913, p. 6.

[58]Zdanevich, Letter to his mother, March 1912. Archives of the State Russian Museum, Fond 177, op. 50, ed. kh. 21. See Kovtun, *Mikhail Larionov*, p. 91.

[59]The Stray Dog Cabaret was originally founded by Nikolai Evreinov, Nikolai Kulbin and Boris Pronin, in 1911 and it served as an intellectual and artistic centre during its almost four-year existence. The night club closed in 1915. Pronin was not as antagonistic as Larionov and the Futurists, and Livshits reports that he wished to keep things as peaceful as possible, which was presumably a business decision. Nonetheless, he never lost his sense of humour as demonstrated by an announcement for the Stray Dog that depicted a little poodle lifting its leg. For more on Pronin and the authorities, see ibid., p. 219.

[60]Livshits states that "[Pronin]...certainly did not ignore the interest which the 'pharmicists' manifested in the literary and artistic bohemia, especially their wish to see it 'on home ground' and to meet it informally." One such example of Pronin's exploitation of the bourgeois interest can be seen in the signing of the pig skin folio at the entrance of the Stray Dog: "[The poet Anna] Akhmatova used to float in... At the entrance she paused for Pronin to rush up to her and insist that she write her latest verses in the 'pig' book and the simple hearted 'pharmacists' tried to guess what was in them – which made them only more curious still." Ibid., pp. 215 and 217.

[61]Ibid., p. 214–15. The development of their own jargon seems to be related to criminal slang, which, according to Brooks, became more commonplace and may have been passed to the wider public, including the avant-garde, via *lubok* peddlers. Brookes, *When Russia Learned to Read*, p. 174.

[62]Livshits, *The One and a Half-Eyed Archer*, p. 215.

famous the length and breadth of Russia, were taken unawares and, uncomplainingly, submitted to this stipulation... the main point of the programme was not the scheduled part, but the unscheduled one."[63] Obviously much rested upon the element of surprise. Pronin, however, did not physically threaten or verbally abuse his audience in the same manner as Larionov and the Futurists.

From these accounts it becomes obvious that, whereas the hooligans were perceived as a threat to public safety, the avant-garde artists were seen mainly as entertainment and the bourgeoisie paid for the privilege of witnessing and participating in these antics, and an evening's repute often hinged upon whether the police were called in to disperse the crowd.

Larionov turned to the subject of hooliganism in his Neo-primitivist painting between 1909 and 1911, and he glorified their drunken brawls and anti-social behaviour. In pre-Revolutionary Russia public drunkenness was viewed as an encouragement of immorality and crime.[64]

Dancing, 1909, is the first painting by Larionov that can be included in his hooligan series (Fig. 32). He exhibited this painting, along with a number of his most recent works, at the Golden Fleece in Moscow from December 1909 to January 1910.[65] This indicates that Larionov

---

[63]Ibid.

[64]Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, p. 86.

[65]These paintings include *Walk in a Provincial Town* (cat. 50), his two preparatory studies for this painting *The Provincial Coquette* and *The Provincial Dandy* (cats 48 and 49), *The Gypsy* (cat. 46), *Women Passing By* (cat. 47) and *The Dough Kneaders* (cat. 51).

considered this canvas an example of his most current trends in painting: his developing Neo-primitivist style.

On the surface, *Dancing* appears rather straightforward: Larionov presented the viewer with three couples dancing. The background is devoid of detail, which makes it impossible to identify the exact location, possibly a tavern or night club, as indicated by the cropped chair on the right and the figures' activities. The austere setting pushes the figures forward.

Larionov's Neo-primitivist devices in this work distinguish it from any elegant, romantic or theatrical scene of dancing and socializing, such as Symbolist Nikolai Sapunov's *The Ball* of *ca.* 1907–10 (Fig. 33). Larionov was certainly aware of Sapunov's work as they shared a similar interest in the Symbolist primacy of colour, colour relationships and its potential emotive qualities.[66] The two artists exhibited together three times between 1906 and 1909, a period in which Larionov was exploring Symbolism and developing Neo-primitivism.[67] Unlike Sapunov, Larionov used pictorial technique to convey the dynamic nature of this work. He smeared visible strokes aggressively onto the canvas using harsh, angular brushwork, and provided the figures with an uneven movement pattern setting them in a rather claustrophobic space. Also aggressive is the warm palette of vivid colours intensified by the light source that appears to come

---

[66]Peter Stupples places Sapunov primarily in the category that he calls organic symbolism, which "treats the canvas as a field upon which to explore fluid and multipotent colour relationships...." Peter Stupples, *Pavel Kuznetsov: His Life and Art* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 87.

[67]The World of Art, St. Petersburg, February 1906; the Wreath-Stephanos, January 1908; and the Union of Russian Artists, St. Petersburg, 1909.

from the lower right. Their faces are obviously flushed as indicated by orange and pink hues, which emphasizes the energy of this scene.

It is clear that Larionov's couples have not been formally trained in the art of ballroom dancing. When compared with more traditional representations, such as Vladimir Egorov's illustration of *The Ball* from L. N. Andreev's *Life of Man* for the Moscow Art Theatre in 1907, the awkward nature of their movement becomes obvious (Fig. 34). The fluidity of the dance is the prominent feature in Egorov's gouache, and this sense of harmony between music and motion and the elegance of movement is absent in Larionov's canvas. Larionov's dancers are closer to the couple portrayed in Sophia Baudouin de Courtenay's *Scene in a Tavern*, published in *Ogonek* in 1911 (Fig. 35).[68]

Dancing has traditionally been associated with paganism, drunkenness, and therefore sexuality. These notions are known to have existed in Russia since the medieval era.[69] Dancing, alcohol and sexual pleasures were an integral part of pagan festivals. The energetic coarseness in Larionov's painting can be read in these terms. The tavern or night club setting indicates the consumption of alcohol, as do the flushed faces of the figures. The stances of the dancers suggest that they are dancing the tango, an aggressive and sexually charged dance then seen by the avant-garde as "a gesture of radical chic and sexual

---

[68]*Ogonek*, 23 April 1911, unpaginated, Howard, *The Union of Youth: an Artist's Society of the Russian Avant-Garde* (Manchester, 1992), p. vi. It is possible that Baudouin de Courtenay was aware of *Dancing*; however, her canvas with its flattened figures and multiple viewpoints is less dynamic than Larionov's works on the same theme.
[69]Eve Levin, *Sex and Society in the World of the Orthodox Slavs, 900–1700* (Ithaca, 1989), pp. 40–42.

emancipation."[70] The tango was particularly popular with this group in the 1910s.[71] Larionov himself later demonstrated his interest in the tango by referring to it in his face painting manifesto, and in the meeting with the editor of *Theatre in Caricatures* detailed earlier. He also starred in the film *Drama in the Futurist's Cabaret Number 13*, in which Elsa Krüger danced a tango. Like face painting, the tango allowed for the use of the body in a new, theatrical manner.

The tango, while embraced by the avant-garde, was considered indecent by the bourgeoisie, mainly due to the closeness of the partners and their provocative movements. Sexuality in Larionov's work is expressed through the intensity of the dancers' movements and expressions, the fervent lines and the emotive colours. Larionov did not portray traditional couples in this work; instead men dance with men and women with women. Therefore this work would have been considered shocking by the bourgeois audience, as it is the visual expression of bawdy behaviour.

---

[70]Bowlt, "A Brazen Can-Can in the Temple of Art: the Russian Avant-Garde and Popular Culture," *Modern Art and Popular Culture: Readings in High and Low*, ed. by K. Varnedoe and A. Gopnik (New York, 1990), p. 142.

[71]Examples demonstrating the contemporary interest in and influence of the tango include: Elsa Krüger's performance of the tango which received press attention in Z., "E.A. Krügcr o 'tango,'" *Teatr v karrikaturakh*, 16, 1913, p. 24; the organized discussion *On the Tango* at the Kalishnikov Bread Exchange in St. Petersburg on 13 April 1914 in which Kulbin and Nikolai Solovev spoke in favour of the dance, whereas Natan Altman, Teffi (Nadezhda Brichinskaia) and Zdanevich spoke against it. See Zdanevich, "O tango," manuscript in the archives of the State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg, fond 177, ed. khr. 29; Malevich's two canvases *Argentine Polka*, 1911, and *Woman at a Poster Column*, 1914, the latter of which contains a portion of a photograph depicting a couple tangoing; the Burliuk brothers and Vasilii Kamenskii's Cubo-Futurist publication *Tango with Cows* [*Tango s korovami*] in 1914; and the film *The Last Tango*, which was released in 1915.

The painting may possibly be a comment on male homosexuality.[72] Homosexuality and bisexuality were openly practised in Muscovite Russia and throughout the eighteenth century.[73] However, by the dawn of the nineteenth century homosexuality went largely underground, resurfacing in the early twentieth century, and becoming the subject of much debate.[74] While homosexuality was considered immoral by some and a sign of the decadence of modern life, others viewed it as a viable alternative lifestyle, as well as a symbol of sexual emancipation. Most Russians, however, thought of homosexuality as deviant behaviour that subverted the existing "patriarchal framework of reproductive sexuality," while simultaneously "invert[ing] expected gender attributes."[75]

In *Dancing*, Larionov highlighted a standard of personal behaviour that was outside the accepted norm, and brought it into the realm of high

---

[72]Vasilii Rozanov published an essay in favour of homosexuality in the journal *Vesy* [*The Balance*] in 1909. Four years later he published a book entitled *People of Lunar Light* on the same subject. G.S. Novopolin took the opposite stance in his publication *The Pornographic Element in Russian Literature,* 1909. These debates resulted in part from the prominence of literature focusing upon gay themes and experiences. See, for example, Mikhail Kuzmin's *Wings*, 1906, *Nets*, 1908, and *Autumnal Lakes*, 1912; as well as the works of Nikolai Klyuev and Ryurik Ivnev.

[73]Visitors to Muscovite Russia repeatedly expressed surprise at the prevalence of homosexuality. The eleventh-century *Legend of Boris and Gleb* features homosexual love, and Vasilii III was openly and exclusively gay and could produce heirs only when he and his wife were accompanied in bed by one of the officers of his guard. Although Ivan the Terrible had a number of wives, he had a known weakness for young men. Peter the Great's was also bisexual. Homosexuality was reportedly common among the peasant classes as well. See Simon Karlinsky, "Russia's Gay Literature & History (11th–20th centuries)," *Gay Sunshine*, 29–30, 1976, pp. 1–6.

[74]Examples include Grigorii Iokhved, "Pederastiia, zhizn i zakon," *Prakticheskii vrach*, 33, 1904, pp. 871–73; E.V. Erikson, "O polovom razvrate i neestesvennykh polovykh snosheniiakh v korennom naselnii Kavkaza," *Vestnik obshchestvennoi gigieny, sudebnoi i prakticheskoi meditisny*, 12, 1906, pp. 1868–93; and A. Shvarts, "K voprosu o priznakakh privychnoi passivnoi pederasti (Iz nabliudenii v aziatskoi chasti g. Tashkents), *Vestnik obshchestvennoi gigieny, sudebnoi i prakticheskoi meditisny*, 6, 1906, pp. 816–18.

[75]Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, pp. 55–56.

art by exhibiting it in an art gallery. *Dancing*, then, acts as a celebration of both unconventional and uncivilized behaviour.

A second painting by Larionov that counters the trivial world of middle-class affectations is *The Soldier's Tavern*, also known as *The Soldier's Cabaret*, painted in 1909–10, which also focuses on the activities of three couples in a tavern frequented by soldiers, as indicated by both the title and the two uniformed figures in the scene (Fig. 36). As conscripts were not allowed to enter any establishment that served alcohol, these elements indicate that it is either an officer's club or a public house that illegally caters to soldiers.[76] The men are engaged in various degrees of socializing with members of the opposite sex. The couple to the far right of the canvas sit at a table where they smoke, hold hands and talk. The central couple dance. The couple to the far left of the canvas is the most intimate of the three: they sit in close proximity to one another, and the man embraces his female companion as he speaks to her.

The fact that the woman at the table smokes indicates that she and the other women are most likely prostitutes.[77] At the turn of the century, female smokers were identified as loose women. Leo Tolstoy, for

---

[76]John Bushnell, *Mutiny Amid Repression: Russian Soldiers in the Revolution of 1905–1906* (Bloomington, 1985), p. 10.

[77]This is also found in nineteenth-century French art, as well as in the work of Edvard Munch. For literature on smoking in nineteenth- and twentieth-century art, see Patricia G. Berman, "Edvard Munch's Self-Portrait with Cigarette: Smoking and the Bohemian Persona," *Art Bulletin*, 75, 1993, pp. 627–46; Alan Corbin, "Commercial Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century France," *Representations*, 14, 1986, pp. 209–19; Delores Mitchell, "The Iconology of Smoking in Turn of the Century Art," *Source: Notes on the History of Art*, 6, 1987, pp. 27–33; and Mitchell, "The 'New Woman' as Prometheus. Women Depict Women Smoking," *Woman's Art Journal*, 12, 1991, pp. 3–9.

example, related tobacco dependence with "the immoral and the ill-bred," and asked:[78]

> Why is it that almost all gamblers are smokers? Why is it that among the female sex the women who lead blameless, regular lives are the least frequently addicted to smoking? Why do courtesans and the insane all smoke without exception?[79]

Similar to contemporary attitudes towards sex and alcohol, smoking was seen as a habit that not only corrupted women but also contributed to social decline. The intimacy of the couple on the left, as well as her revealing décolletage and calf-length skirt, indicates that indeed these women are sexually active.

The presence of a dog, who is afforded a central position in the background of the canvas, may well indicate that the soldiers are in fact conscripts, as they were often subject to the same restrictions as these animals. In many garrison towns, conscripts were greeted by signs that read "No soldiers or dogs" thereby forbidding both from walking along the streets and in the gardens.[80] Larionov's tavern, it seems, accepts both. In the painting on the right wall a pig is discernible, which confirms the low rank of these men.

This painting is reminiscent of Vincent van Gogh's *Night Café*, 1888, which Larionov knew about from The Golden Fleece in Moscow during Spring 1908, and the journal of the same name (Fig. 37).[81]

---

[78]Tolstoy, "The Ethics of Wine-Drinking and Tobacco-Smoking," *Contemporary Review*, 59, 1891, pp. 178–79.
[79]Ibid., p. 179.
[80]Bushnell, *Mutiny Amid Repression*, p. 10.
[81]*Night Café* (cat. 86) was one of five works that van Gogh exhibited at this exhibition. The canvas was also published in *Zolotoe Runo*, 1908, 7–8, pp. 58–59.

Larionov exhibited 13 works at this show and his paintings were illustrated in the same issue. The empty space in the foreground of van Gogh's painting recurs in Larionov's work as a means to establish a physical distance between the audience and the scene. Larionov also took the general arrangement from van Gogh. The seated couple on the right and the prominence of the ceiling light are direct paraphrases of van Gogh's canvas.

Larionov's work, however, was painted more violently, with the paint aggressively smeared onto the canvas. Whereas van Gogh used acrid colours and tonal disharmonies to portray a frantic scene where "one [could] ruin oneself, go mad, or commit a crime," Larionov used his palette of warm colours to denote an energetic scene that is sexually charged.[82] Indeed, both scenes portray the dark power and immoral attractions of a low public house.

Among Larionov's hooligan paintings, two later canvases depict tavern brawls, both entitled *Quarrel in a Tavern*, and dating to 1911. The Nizhnii Novgorod version depicts three men fighting while another watches calmly (Fig. 38).[83] The standing figure to the left either bends down to pick up an object off the floor before him or staggers due to injuries received during the quarrel. An overturned chair at the front and slightly abbreviated by the bottom edge of the canvas enhances the

---

[82]Letter 534, from van Gogh to his brother Theo, dated 8 September 1888. Van Gogh, *The Complete Letters of Vincent van Gogh*, vol. III, p. 31. The painting is also discussed in letter 533.

[83]The painting is currently located in the Nizhnii Novgorod State Art Museum, and for the purposes of this discussion the canvas will be referred to as the Nizhnii Novgorod version.

physicality of the brawl. The seated man appears detached from the action despite the fact that, as indicated by the full glass on the table and the empty chairs around it, his companions are involved in the ruckus.

In the Thyssen-Bornemisza version all four figures participate in the fight (Fig. 39).[84] Larionov has omitted most objects, and has pushed the action to the forefront, bringing the drunken brawl closer to the viewer.

Fisticuffs and tavern scenes were favourite subjects of mid eighteenth-century *lubki*. Comic brawls, gambling and general anti-social behaviour are often found in these traditional sources. In *In the Tavern*, for example, the caption reads, "...we'll knock your stuffing out," but the threat is barely indicated by the standing male's gesture (Fig. 40). *Paramoshka and Savoska as Card Players*, 1760s, is a humorous woodcut depicting two popular characters in Russian folklore (Fig. 41). Paramoshka, always the more fortunate of the pair, has just beaten Savoska at a game of cards and the latter sobs as a result of his misfortune. Paramoshka is also portrayed victorious in the mid eighteenth-century woodcut *Forma, Paramoshka and Yerioma*, where he has just defeated the notoriously unsuccessful brothers Forma and Yerioma in a street brawl (Fig. 42). While there is no question of the eventual success of the hero and the repentance of his ill-fated comparison(s) in the traditional depictions, moral messages in Larionov's tavern and dance scenes are absent. Larionov was in fact intentionally vague as to the identity of the

[84]The painting is currently located in the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, and for the purposes of this discussion the canvas will be referred to as the Thyssen-Bornemisza version.

heroes and villains, and he left it uncertain as to which of these will emerge victorious.

Fisticuffs were also a common occurrence during peasant celebrations where alcohol was served.[85] This type of drunken behaviour was also seen in urban settings once peasants moved to cities as a result of industrialization. The figures in Larionov's scenes are dressed in suits, which suggests that they may be members of the bourgeoisie. If so, the paintings show a juxtaposition of class and behaviour. Larionov shows bourgeois men behaving like peasants and hence violating the code of conduct ascribed to their own class. This comportment is more in keeping with the hooliganism of the avant-garde.

These last two hooligan images by Larionov can be related to the concurrent rise in popularity of bandit literature, which traditionally illustrated a defiant assertion of behaviour deemed unacceptable. Contemporary accounts indicate that this literature was most commonly read by young adults in urban areas, the same group from which the majority of hooligans emerged and whose exploits Larionov and his contemporaries emulated[86].

The term bandit in pre-Revolutionary Russia referred to anyone whose actions or professions brought them into conflict with the state, which included both hooligans and avant-garde artists. Acts such as public brawls and drunkenness were included in this category. In Russian bandit

---

[85]Smith and Christian, *Bread and Salt*, pp. 93–94.

[86]Brooks demonstrates that there was a weakening of traditional attitudes towards the rebellious individual in Russian popular literature during the nineteenth century. See Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read*, Chapter 5, and pp. 176 and 210.

tales social outcasts eventually atone for their sins and choose to rejoin organized society. Social order always triumphs over self-assertive behaviour, which is not necessarily the case in Larionov's works. Larionov's protagonists are depicted as outcasts during committing their transgression, and the artist leaves the viewer in doubt as to whether they will in fact repent.

A thematic parallel can also be drawn between Larionov's hooligans and the hero-thief in folk tales. The latter is portrayed as an artist of sorts who outwits and makes a fool of his superiors in rank and social standing.[87] In fact, these tales look down upon the easily-robbed victims, who are often blamed for their own downfall. This mockery of the higher classes was appealing to peasants, as well as the hooligans.

Similarly, Larionov felt that the "Philistines" in his audience warranted the shock of his defiant paintings because they confronted his art with a closed mind and subsequently allowed themselves to be disturbed by the subject matter and treatment of the works exhibited.[88]

Larionov's hooligan images are the complete antithesis to didactic *lubki* of good manners and virtue, like the eighteenth-century woodcut *Know Thyself, Give Instructions in Your Own House* (Fig. 43). The text here explains that guests should obey the host and be grateful for and enjoy what they are offered without being judgmental. It also provides instruction on how to act when receiving guests. The host should be

---

[87]Maureen Perrie, "Folklore as Evidence of Peasant *Mentalité*: Social Attitudes and Values in Russian Popular Culture," *The Russian Review*, 48, 1989, pp. 119–32.

[88]The same can be said for the audiences of his later Futurist evenings: their presence at these functions left them open to all of the abuse that Larionov and his companions had to

courteous and polite and observe social norms. If the guest conducts himself properly he will be treated with respect, but if he does not, his host will eject him into the streets. Larionov's protagonists have clearly ignored any such advice.

I Am a Hop High Head, late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century engraving, illustrates the consequences of drinking (Fig. 44). According to the text, drink reduces a man to nothing and drunkards are "the most wretched of all human beings." *Conversation of a Drinker with a Non-Drinker*, an engraving from the first quarter of the nineteenth century, instructs the public on how to drink responsibly (Fig. 45). The non-drinker asserts that wine will only bring tragedy and that it takes a physical toll on the drinker's body. The drinker does not necessarily contradict his companion, but adds that there is no harm in drinking wine as long as one is sensible about the whole pursuit. Similarly, *The Drunkard at the Tavern*, second quarter of the nineteenth century, is a tripartite image condemning drunkenness; and *Two Peasants Visiting a Tavern*, 1857, illuminates the dangers of drinking and gambling to two peasants who have just arrived from the countryside, one of whom still wears his traditional *lapti* (Figs 46–47).

Larionov's hooligan paintings counter these traditional didactic tales. Larionov displayed neither censure nor scorn towards his hooligan subjects. Instead, he parodied the affectations and pretensions of the bourgeoisie by highlighting contrary deportment, like suggestive dancing,

---

give.

drunkenness and bar room brawls. These images not only sanction but also celebrate what established society categorized as immoral.

Goncharova's hooligans include *The Drunks*, 1911. Here peasants are the focus of the painting, situated in a rural setting. (Fig. 48). Three peasant women dance in a line with their arms linked. An obviously drunken man looks on from the left and toasts the women while a seated woman in the background embraces a small child.

Although the title clearly indicates that this is a scene of drunken revelry, it remains unclear as to whether these figures have simply abandoned their responsibilities or whether they are celebrating a religious or harvest festival.[89] Both secular and religious rural popular celebrations were known to be unruly events where copious amounts of alcohol were consumed. As early as the fourteenth century laws had been enacted to protect landowners from the violence and mayhem that invariably resulted on these occasions, but the intensity of these popular celebrations did not diminish before the October Revolution.[90]

The seated woman behind the dancers gives no indication of drunkenness as she tends to the child in her arms. Therefore, Goncharova provided a juxtaposition between the older women who celebrate and the young mother who does not abandon her responsibilities in spite of the revelry.

---

[89]For peasants in the countryside drinking was rooted in ancient traditions and popular customs. As such, it was socially acceptable on four occasions: (1) religious or secular holidays; (2) significant family events; (3) to show hospitality; and (4) while conducting a business transaction, including the harvest. D. Christian, "Tradition and Modern Drinking Cultures in Russia on the Eve of Emancipation," *Australian Slavonic and East European Studies*, 1, 1987, pp. 66–75.

Goncharova, like Larionov, seems to have utilized folk items and icons as sources. The three feathery trees, which form a triangle enclosing the women, can also be found in a number of *lubki*. The leaves are not painted individually but as a stylized mass; and they are similar to the decorative foliage found in the foreground of, for example, the eighteenth-century lubok *The Barber Wants to Cut the Old Believer's Beard* (Fig. 49).[91] The simplification of these elongated feathery trees is also reminiscent of those in icon painting, such as *The Ascension*, 1542, as is the harsh angular drapery, the abstracted representation of the facial features with emphasized eyes and nose, and the use of varying scales (Fig. 50).[92] The adoption of this painting style traditionally reserved for biblical and religious images would indicate that the peasant celebration is of a Christian nature. The use of folk and icon painting techniques here would have been considered contentious, especially as the State and the Church were trying to curtail the use of alcohol during these festivities.[93]

Goncharova may have been commenting on the involvement of women in the uncivilized behaviour associated with these festivities, hence the juxtaposition between the drunken dancers and the virtuous mother. In contemporary Russian thought there was an established connection between drunkenness and immorality in women, and this can be traced

---

[90]Smith and Christian, *Bread and Salt*, pp. 81–82 and Chapter 8.

[91]Later Goncharova again paraphrased the abstracted leaf and floral forms found in folk motifs in her costume design, as demonstrated by the motif in the top of the dress in the sketch of a Woman's Costume for *Le Coq d'Or*.

[92]The three dancers in Goncharova's painting are taller than the seated figure in the background, and the trees are considerably taller than the architecture.

[93]Smith and Christian, *Bread and Salt*, pp. 92ff and 168ff, and Chapter 8. See also Frank, "Confronting the Domestic Other," pp. 74–107.

back to the beginning of the nineteenth century, when Paul I decreed that all women "who have turned to drunkenness, indecency and a dissolute life" were to be exiled to Siberia for forced labour.[94]

2.4 Popular entertainments

The paintings by Goncharova and Larionov that can be grouped under the heading popular entertainments focus upon pastimes that were either undergoing a period of change or that had been recently introduced to the Russian public, such as the circus and the cinema, respectively. It was these new trends that Goncharova and Larionov concentrated on in this series, and in so doing the artists celebrated the rituals and ceremonies of the changing world of popular culture. As each of these pursuits constituted an experience in which the audience was an integral part, assuming an active role and reacting with cheers, jeers and shock, these images can be equated to the Futurist evenings and activities, except that the former attracted audiences from a variety of social backgrounds while the latter was attended mainly by the bourgeoisie. Under the circus tent as well and at the film house both lower and upper classes came into contact in pursuit of amusement. I contend that with these works the artists sought to blur the distinctions between high and low art. By exhibiting these paintings, the artists transformed the art gallery, a space reserved for the cultured elite, into a form of popular entertainment where the bourgeoisie

---

[94]See Laurie Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters: Prostitutes and Their Regulation in Imperial Russia* (Berkeley, 1995), p. 15.

were exposed to the same lower-class activities that they viewed under the circus tent and at the movie house.

Circus performers were known to use their acts to make comical critiques of the establishment in their acts, like the renowned clown and animal trainer Vladimir Durov. He regularly sent one of his pigs into the wealthier sections of the audience and shouted out, "You miserable beast! What are you doing? Deserting me to rejoin that family of yours?"[95]

Chekhov related a similar incident he witnessed in Moscow:

> Durov's ingenue [a performing pig] provides the audience with the greatest of aesthetic pleasures. She dances, grunts on command, shoots a pistol and, unlike so many Moscow oinkers, reads the newspapers. During Durov's last performance he presented, as one of his tricks, a pig reading the papers. It was offered a variety of newspapers, but indignantly refused each of them in turn, grunting suspiciously all the while. At first they thought that pigs hate publicity too, but when the animal was offered a copy of *The Moscow Leaflet*, it oinked happily, wiggled its tail, and, pressing its snout to the paper, shook its head excitedly. Such swinish delight gave Durov the right to make a public statement to the effect that all papers are intended for people, while the popular *Moscow Leaflet*.... Avid readers of the *Moscow Leaflet* who were present at the time were not annoyed. On the contrary, they were delighted and applauded the pig vigorously."[96]

Chekhov's statement indicates that, similar to their participation in the Futurist evenings and the cabarets, the wealthier members of the circus audience enjoyed this attention in spite of the fact that it was meant as criticism of their pretensions.

Durov also used his act to make political statements:

---

[95]John H. Townsen, *Clowns* (New York, 1976), p. 315; David Lewis Hammarstrom, *Circus Rings Around Russia* (Hamdon, CT, 1983), p. 40.

[96]L. Gavrilenko, "Chekhov and the Circus," *The Soviet Circus*, ed. by A. Lipovsky, trans. by F. Glagoleva (Moscow, 1967), pp. 195–96.

> When in Odessa, Durov painted his pig green and rode her into the ring. It did not escape the audience's attention that he was mocking the anti-Semitic mayor, Admiral Zelyony, whose name means green, and he was barred from the city thereafter.[97]

Since, as these reminiscences indicate, the circus was associated with attacks on social and political groups. Goncharova and Larionov's paintings of this theme may have been intended to have similar meaning. The artists' choice of the circus as subject matter for these works may have also been informed by the nature of a carnival as a temporary society that acts outside of the mores of everyday life.[98] Circus culture, like the one Goncharova and Larionov sought to establish for themselves, is comprised of its own rituals, which also provide an excuse for parody and bawdy behaviour.[99] Violence, both implied and actual, and humiliation are not only acceptable but expected for the success of the acts. This is similar to the activities of the hooligans and the Futurists. The paintings by Larionov and Goncharova of circus culture may have in fact foreshadowed the antics of the Futurists that were to follow shortly.

By the beginning of the twentieth century the Russian circus had begun to incorporate new forms of entertainment, like acting, tango dancing and wrestling, which eventually became more popular than the

---

[97]Hammarstrom, *Circus Rings Around Russia*, p. 41.

[98]The Circus was also a popular theme in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century pre-Revolutionary Russian literature. Examples include Anton Chekhov, Aleksandr Kuprin and Maksim Gorky.

[99]For an analysis of carnival culture see Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. H. Iswolsky (London, 1968).

traditional animal acts and clown performances.[100] These became part of Goncharova and Larionov's subject matter.

Larionov's *Circus Dancer Before Her Entrance*, 1911, exhibited at the Donkey's Tail in 1912, depicts a female dancer who stands in profile with a cigarette in her mouth (Fig. 51).[101] In her right hand she clutches a railing or a long pole. She wears a very short dress and high heels; she bares a good deal of flesh. Her dress, especially the bodice, is almost flesh colour, giving the illusion that she is even more scantily clad. On the backdrop behind her is an image of a fully clothed man with a large hole in the seat of his trousers, chasing a naked woman with high heels. The man is about to hook the woman with a cane.

The dancer is probably awaiting her cue to enter the ring, and the burlesque scene behind her suggests that the performance is as bawdy as it is humorous. The fact that the central figure is smoking also indicates suggestive behaviour. As already mentioned, female smoking was equated with prostitution and loose behaviour. It also denoted the need for oral gratification, a sexual connotation.[102] Larionov included cigarettes in a number of his canvases from his prostitute series, including *Prostitute at the Hairdresser's, ca.* 1910 (Fig. 52). In other works such as *Woman with a Hat, ca.* 1910–11, Larionov portrayed a male figure smoking a pipe, the

---

[100]Hubertus Jahn, "For Tsar and Fatherland? Russian Popular Culture and the First World War," in *Cultures in Flux: Lower-Class Values, Practices and Resistance in Late Imperial Russia*, ed. by S.P. Frank and M.D. Steinberg (Princeton, 1994), p. 138.
[101]Larionov apparently executed three works on circus themes: *Circus* (cat. 20) was shown at the 1909 Golden Fleece exhibition in Moscow; *Circus Dancer Before Her Entrance* (cat. 120) was shown at the 1912 Donkey's Tail in Moscow; and *Circus Bare-Back Rider* (cat. 61) at the Year 1915 exhibition in Moscow.
[102]Count E.E. Corti, *A History of Smoking* (London, 1931), pp. 270–71.

trail of smoke leading to the female figure's ear, clearly an indication of untoward behaviour (Fig. 53). Larionov's inclusion of the cigarette in this painting then suggests that the circus dancer is also a loose woman.

Larionov's *Circus Dance* is not a new subject in modern art. Henri Toulouse-Lautrec's *In the Wings*, 1899, also portrayed a circus dancer looking on at the performance from back stage (Fig. 54).[103] But, although the French work shares a common theme with Larionov's canvas, the female figure in Toulouse-Lautrec's work is represented in a more traditional manner. Her frilly knee-length costume and ballet slippers are at odds with the plain, mid-thigh length dress and high heels worn by Larionov's figure. Larionov's dancer appears prepared for the most modern of trends, which not only holds deviant sexual implications but also reflects the changes in the types of performances the Russian circus was currently offering the public.

Circus Dancer Before Her Entrance can also be compared to Kees van Dongen's *Red Dancer*, 1907–08, acquired by M.P. Ryabushinskii in 1909 (Fig. 55). The costume of the cabaret dancer in van Dongen's canvas is similar to that of Larionov's figure in the warmth of the colours used and economy of representation. Van Dongen's dancer, however, is pushed to the forefront to fill the entire picture plane. There is no background to divert the viewer's attention from her. She is depicted in action whereas Larionov's dancer is shown in anticipation of action. Both women are represented in profile and exhibit a good deal of flesh. But Larionov has

[103]Jean Sagne identifies this image as one of the artist's representations of circus life.

replaced the smile of van Dongen's dancer with a cigarette, to denote her status as a circus dancer, women who in fact sometimes moonlighted as prostitutes. Wrestling was one of the most current forms of entertainment included under the Russian circus tent during the early twentieth century. Konstantin Stanislavskii recalls an evening performance at the Bat in 1908 that presented the audience with a caricature-like parody of this subject:

> Reflecting the great enthusiasm for wrestling there was the parody of a wrestling match. A Frenchman wrestled with a Russian. The Frenchman, graceful, thin, in tights, was Kachalov; the hefty Russian cabman in a shirt of rolled-up sleeves was Gribunin. Of course there was no wrestling but only a burlesque, the grotesque of the funny side of the bought decisions of the wrestling jury and the crooked methods of the wrestlers themselves. Moskvin in his tactlessness gave all of this away to the audience.[104]

Numerous wrestling parodies were also staged at the Moscow Art Theatre during the 1910 to 1911 season.[105] Further, in 1909 M. Raskatov published *In the Devil's Claw*, a *kopeck* novel in which the hero is a circus wrestler who, foregoing a university education in pursuit of this lifestyle, saves both his community and the beautiful animal trainer from a villain with supernatural powers.[106] These examples indicate the popularity of wrestling at this time.

Visual artists were also interested in wrestling. Goncharova later recalled that sometime before Vladimir Tatlin left for Berlin in 1913, he

---

Sagne, *Toulouse-Lautrec au Ciruqe* (Paris, 1991), pp. 44–45.

[104]Stanislavskii, *My Life in Art*, trans. by J.J. Robbin (London, 1991), pp. 451–52.

[105]V. Gotovtsev, "Merry Evenings at the Art Theatre," *The Soviet Circus*, ed. by A. Lipovsky, trans. by F. Glagoleva (Moscow, 1967), pp. 212–13.

[106]Raskatov, *In the Devil's Claw* (Kopeika, 1909). See Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read*, p. 183.

had worked as a circus wrestler to supplement his income. However, due to physical weakness and a lack of ability, he lost the hearing in his left ear and gave up the sport.[107] Wrestling proved so popular in Russia that the World Wrestling Championships were held in St. Petersburg in 1912.[108] In 1909 Goncharova translated this favoured theme into the visual arts.

Between 1909 and 1910 Goncharova executed two very similar canvases with this subject.[109] Simply entitled *Wrestlers*, both paintings present the viewer with two costumed men in a wrestling hold (Figs 56–57). Although the surroundings in both works are ambiguous, most likely the scenes are set at a circus for fairground, the most common places for these events. It is likely that Goncharova modelled the compositions on newspaper advertisements where wrestlers were commonly depicted in a wresting hold, as in a 1909 announcement for the Tsinizelli Circus, reminiscent of Goncharova's figures.[110]

The first version, currently at the State Russian Museum in St. Petersburg, is slightly less developed than the version at the Pompidou Centre in Paris.[111] In the latter work the vantage point of the viewer has changed, as the wrestlers are no longer depicted in a horizontal

---

[107]Gray, *The Russian Experiment*, p. 174.

[108]Contemporary photographs of this event are published in Yelena Barchatova et al., *A Portrait of Tsarist Russia: Unknown Photographs from the Soviet Archives*, trans. by M. Robinson (New York, 1995), p. 186.

[109]Goncharova also executed a canvas entitled *Circus*, which was illustrated in *The Golden Fleece*, 2–3, 1909. The work has since been lost.

[110]*Rech*, 18 March 1909, p. 1.

[111]Both paintings can be dated to *ca.* 1909–10, but it appears that the canvas currently located in the Russian Museum was painted first. This is my own chronology, based solely on stylistic devices. The exhibition records of the two works provide no clues, as they were both displayed for the first time in December 1910: The Petersburg canvas at the Knave of Diamonds (cat. 37) in Moscow and the Paris version at the Izdebskii Salon (cat. 95) in Odessa.

arrangement. Instead they now form a diagonal with one wrestler slightly in front of the other. Goncharova also used colour more emotively in the second canvas. The wrestler on the left, who is closer to the viewer, is rendered in bold yellow, orange, red and black, while his opponent, who is further away, is painted in green and black. The shadows cast by the figures are also more pronounced in the later work.

Goncharova seems to have again looked at woodcuts as source, as indicated by the similar subject in her paintings to that in the mid eighteenth-century woodcut *Stout Fellows, Doughty Wrestlers*. This work depicts two wrestlers in position about to start an open match and they grip one another in an attempt to throw their opponent onto the ground (Fig. 58). The figures don contemporary garb and they are placed in a stylized setting. The men are competing for the prize of two boiled eggs, depicted in the foreground. But Goncharova's rendition of wrestlers are obviously more powerful and dramatic. Hers are true athletes locked in an intense struggle denoted in their poses and expressions. The stylized setting is gone and instead the figures stand in an undefined field of intense colour that focuses our attention completely on them.

One would be tempted to view the struggle between the wrestlers as a metaphor for the struggle between tradition and modernity that Goncharova and her fellow Neo-primitivists were grappling with at this time. The different palettes used to depict each wrestler in the Pompidou version would suggest this. The darkened monochromatic and hence dull figure on the right could in fact be read as a reference to stale traditional

art, while the more colourful figure on the left would be a metaphor for the more exciting modern style.

Bowlt reads Ilia Mashkov's *Self Portrait with Petr Konchalovskii*, 1910, also exhibited at the Knave of Diamonds exhibition along similar lines (Fig. 59). In this painting Mashkov and Konchalovskii are shown as idealized, muscular athletes in a fully developed domestic setting surrounded by dumbbells and weights, as well as by musical instruments, sheet music, books and art. In this work the artist juxtaposed brain and brawn, the intellectual with the physical. Bowlt relates this to the question of the inclusion of the low and popular culture in high art.[112] Mashkov's canvas is more self-conscious in presentation than Goncharova's *Wrestlers*. She communicated the power of these works through her Neo-primitivist style and her presentation of the unidealized sweaty wrestlers alone. Props would have proven superfluous. Instead, Goncharova simply transported this low form of popular entertainment to the art gallery without further commentary.

Larionov also turned to the burgeoning world of the cinema in his art. Between 1903 and 1907 the number of cinemas in Moscow grew from two to 70, which testifies to the intense popularity of films in pre-Revolutionary Russia.[113] Tsar Nicholas II recognized the genre's potential for propaganda and had all official ceremonies recorded in celluloid.

---

[112]Bowlt, "A Brazen Can-Can in the Temple of Art," pp. 138–39.

[113]Cinemas were so popular that due to public protest the authorities were forced to extend opening hours from 9:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Noël Simsolo "The Cinema," in *Moscow, 1900–1930*, ed. by S. Fauchereau (New York, 1988), p. 242.

Russians had begun making their own films by 1907.[114] The industry was watched closely by the censors and films that were perceived as a threat to the autocratic regime were banned.

The Russian avant-garde exhibited a keen interest in the cinema. In fact Goncharova and Larionov were involved in the making of *Drama in the Futurists' Cabaret Number 13*, which has been labelled as the first avant-garde film.[115] Produced in late 1913 and released in January 1914, there are no extant copies of this *ca.* 20–25 minute film, barring a still featuring Larionov and a woman thought to be Goncharova (Fig. 60).[116] The film was a parody of a detective story, a genre that found great popularity in contemporary *lubok* fiction (as well as with hooligans), and it contained the hallmarks of the Futurists and their evenings: painted faces, brightly coloured waistcoats, spoons and radishes in men's buttonholes, men with earrings, the tango, nudity, violence and behaviour orchestrated to assault the supposed good taste of the bourgeoisie.[117]

Larionov's interest in the cinema found visual form in his canvas *Scene – The Cinema*, 1912 (Fig. 61). Although the artist attributed the canvas to the year 1907, it is more likely that he painted this work, which was first exhibited as the 1912 Donkey's Tail exhibition, in 1911–12.[118] Of this painting, Parkin wrote:

---

[114]Ibid., pp. 242, 244.
[115]Jerry Heil, "Russian Futurism and the Cinema: Majakovskij's Film Work of 1913," *Russian Literature*, 14, 1986, p. 175 n2.
[116]Michael Kirby, *Futurist Performance* (New York, 1971), p. 122, gives no source for this information.
[117]For a complete discussion on the plot of the film as well as the extent of the participants' involvement, see Heil, "Russian Futurism and the Cinema," pp. 175–192.
[118]Cat. 123. The work was also exhibited in Paris at the Galerie Paul Guillaume.

> In some of Larionov's pieces attention is attracted by his desire to interpret those very things that evoke the greatest number of attacks at present: photography, cinematography, newspaper advertisements. Flying in the face of everything, he paints in the style of these things, confirming in the best way the idea that anything whatsoever can serve as an object for a talented artist.[119]

Executed in the style of black and white cinematography, Larionov's image is grainy. The painting is delineated in tones of black, grey and white, with areas of bare canvas. The paint appears smudged and smeared, and the setting is murky to enhance the haziness of the picture. The composition depicts a seated couple, with another walking across the background. The two extra feet underneath the figures suggest the movement in film.

Some contemporary observers felt that films were "eccentric nonsense, only a visual accumulation of banalities and idiotisms."[120] It is possible, then, that in presenting the theme of the cinema Larionov was commenting upon the relationship between high and low culture. Similar to his presentation of dancing couples in *Dancing* and *The Soldier's Tavern*, he was in *Scene – The Cinema* highlighting a popular modernist pursuit, as opposed to the more traditional, cultured night at the theatre.

Larionov predated many of his works for this show, and the date of *Scene – The Cinema* is listed as 1906 in the exhibition catalogue (cat. 11). This date, as well as the artist's later attribution to 1907, is far too early stylistically. In his 1913 monograph Eganburi dates the work to 1911, which is plausible, but may be slightly early as it may have been painted in 1912.

[119]V. Parkin, "Osliny khvost i mishen," *Osliny khvost i mishen* (Moscow, 1913), pp. 63 ff.

[120]N. Chukovskii, *Literaturnye vospominaniia* (Moscow, 1989), p. 67.

2.5 Conclusion

In the *Gypsy in Tiraspol* and *The Drunks* Larionov and Goncharova respectively looked to rural life for a critique on the codes of behaviour inherent in the dominant urban lifestyle. Goncharova's *The Bread Vendor* and Larionov's *The Baker* illustrate the contemporary hero by championing the everyday activity of menial labourers. Larionov's *The Quarrel in the Tavern* highlights the hooliganish behaviour that was both associated with the lower classes and feared by the upper. Finally, the artists' paintings that focus on the world of popular entertainments celebrate the rituals and ceremonies of the changing world of popular culture.

These paintings focus on themes that might at first glance seem unrelated and rather benign. Closer inspection, however, reveals that they all possess subject matter that either reflects or critiques the urban environment that surrounded Larionov and Goncharova. They are, therefore, the artists' response to urban life.

Through these works Goncharova and Larionov presented themselves as the hooligans of the art gallery. By referring in their work to bohemian behaviour, smoking, drunkenness, the fantasy world of popular entertainments and comportment that was generally considered dangerous, these artists were also attempting to legitimize their own anti-establishment behaviour. Through their presentation of hostile comportment and aesthetics contrary to high art, the artists sought to

challenge these sensibilities and to bring about a new social and visual order in art.

Chapter III
From the Sexual to the Spiritual: Larionov's Representations of the Female Nude, 1912–13

3.1 Introduction

Between 1912 and 1913 Larionov executed a series of paintings that focused upon the female nude, which can be read as prostitutes. These contain none of the noble savage aspects found in his earlier canvases depicting Gypsy women from his native Tiraspol. Instead, these works are raw, aggressive depictions at odds with conventional idealized representations of the nude sanctioned by the academic canon (e.g. Titian's *Venus of Urbino*, 1538, and Alexandre Cabanal's *The Birth of Venus*, 1863). Larionov's unorthodox treatment of the nude challenged the viewer's conception of the classical nude, as well as prostitution and sexuality, and the role of these women within the Russian patriarchy. This chapter presents a reading of the paintings in his prostitute series within this context.

3.2 Pictroial analysis

In the 12 years between the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917, prostitution provided political and social mavericks with a provocative subject with which to express their dissatisfaction with the autocratic government. Laurie Bernstein states that, "Prostitution and its regulation [by the Tsartist government] impinged on questions relating to labour, sexuality, urbanization, public health and the status of women, and thus easily lent themselves to critiques of existing social, economic and

political structures."[1] Larionov's paintings of prostitution served a similar purpose: to question these structures.

Larionov's depictions of the female nude between 1912 and 1913 can be divided into two categories: paintings of prostitutes that provide a critique of both high art and the existing hypocritical values on sexuality; and paintings that provide an alternate contemporary goddess based not on mythology but on native Russian sources and superstitions. The paintings in the first category are *Sonia the Courtesan*, *Katsap Venus*, *Jewish Venus*, *Gypsy Venus* and *Boulevard Venus.* Larionov based these representations upon perceivably traditional sources hitherto respected by his audience, the visual vocabulary of which he then adulterated. Larionov's *Mania*, *Mania the Bitch*, *Spring 1912* and his *Seasons* canvases are representative of the second category.

Larionov was interested in prostitute themes as early as the late 1890s, as demonstrated by the drawing simply entitled *Women* (Fig. 62). The garish clothing of the three women and their ungainly positions, exemplified by the woman with her hand between her breasts, suggest that these are prostitutes in a brothel. The reflection in the mirror between the women in the centre of the drawing shows a servant greeting a bourgeois gentleman in a top hat, presumably a client. A painting depicting a classical bathing scene is shown in the upper left corner, suggesting a comparison between the three bathers with the three prostitutes, the former being an acceptable theme in high art.

---

[1]Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters*, p. 9.

In order to fully appreciate Larionov's works, his earlier bather series of *ca.* 1906–10 must be considered as it informed the artist's later prostitute series. As early as 1906 Larionov demonstrated his understanding of the traditional depictions of the female nude. In *Bathers*, 1906, he presented the viewer with two bathers, one of whom stands with her arms behind her back as she glances over her right shoulder at the seated bather in the background (Fig. 63).[2] Larionov's bathers are unaware of the viewer's presence, instead exchanging glances. Here Larionov followed the established voyeuristic representation of the bathing nude; however, he combined this with innovative stylistic devices such as strong contours, a heavily worked surface characterized by paint of varying degrees of thickness and the immediacy of the standing figure.

Larionov's later depictions of nudes such as *Heads of Bathers (study)* indicate that in 1908 he was heavily indebted to French art (Fig. 64). The pose of a standing woman with her arm outstretched and folded behind quotes the pose of Ingres' *Venus Anadyoéne*; however Larionov's painting also demonstrates his awareness of more modern trends. In comparison to the subdued, Impressionist-inspired palette of the earlier *Bathers*, the pronounced reds, oranges, greens and whites used in both

[2]A painting entitled *Bathers* was shown at the Union of Russian Artists exhibition in St. Petersburg during the winter of 1906. In October 1908 Larionov illustrated a work in The Golden Fleece that was entitled *Bathers*. Although it is unknown whether the two *Bathers* were different works entirely, it is likely that they were in fact the same canvas. In 1908 Larionov does not appear to have used the journal as a vehicle for publishing his most recent works, such as *Fishes* and *Pears* (both published in 1909 in *The Golden Fleece*), but instead illustrated works such as *Flowering Acacias* and *Spring*, both of which were executed in 1906. The fact that *Flowering Acacias*, *Spring* and *Bathers* were illustrated in the same issue seems to point to 1906 as the date for the entire group, which would indicate that the illustrated *Bathers* was most likely the same canvas exhibited in 1906.

Head of Bathers (study) and *Bathers*, 1909, demonstrate Larionov's awareness of Fauvist painting (Fig. 65).[3] This influence was noted by Grabar in his 1909 review of the second Golden Fleece exhibition where Larionov's *Heads of Bathers (study)* was shown:

> One looks at the whole wall of Larionov's paintings with pleasure and is glad that the work of this "Frenchman" is no worse than the row of exhibits by little Matisses.[4]

Although his bold use of colour and brushwork was in keeping with contemporary modernist trends in Russia, both thematically and stylistically Larionov's bathers paintings derive from a more traditional means of representation for this theme.

In 1910, beginning with *Country Bathers*, the most mature canvas of his bather series, his female nudes began to take on a cruder aspect (Fig. 20). Having finally moved away from his French predecessors, Larionov became more aggressive in his style and presentation of these works. *Country Bathers* marks a clear break from the tradition of the classical nude. These female bathers are depicted at the forefront of the picture plane. The central nude occupies the width of the canvas, as she sits and faces the viewer. Her head rests on her right wrist, which in turn rests upon her bent right knee. Behind her a second woman lies on her side with her head resting in the crook of her left elbow.

The positions of the two women portrayed in this work are similar to Gauguin's *What, Are You Jealous?* [*Aha Oe Feii?*], which Shchukin

---

[3] *Heads of Bathers (study)* is also known as *Bathers at Odessa*. The current whereabouts of this painting is unknown. Bowlt and Misler, *The Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection*, p. 172.

acquired in 1908 (Fig. 66). The central figure of this painting is also seated with one leg bent. Her companion lies on her back, to the side and slightly behind the seated woman. Gauguin, however, did not present his figures as monumentally as Larionov, to provide a lyrical landscape setting in harmony with the women. The only distraction Larionov offered his audience is the pig walking across the background. As in *Walk in a Provincial Town*, this pig calls attention to the rural setting of this scene and the provincial nature of these women (Fig. 11).

Larionov's painting is also more provocative than Gauguin's. His main figure raises her leg to reveal more of her female anatomy. This suggestive exposure of the pubic area together with the awkward way in which the women carry themselves results in a much cruder composition than Gauguin's.

At the time when Larionov began his prostitute paintings, the Imperial government became actively concerned about prostitution as the practice posed a threat to national health and security; troops infected with venereal diseases could not necessarily be relied upon in times of need. Prostitution also freed women from sex for reproductive purposes only, which gave them more control over their own sexuality.[5] These women could use their sexuality for monetary gain which provided further independence. As a result, the state began to regulate the profession. Aside from curtailing health and security risks, these regulations were also established as a means of patriarchal control over these women.

---

[4]Grabar, "Moskovskie vystavki II: 'Zolotoe runo,' 'tovarishchestvo,' 'peredvizhniki,'"

Medical inspections of public women [*publichnye zhenshchuny*], the official categorization of prostitutes, were introduced by Catherine the Great, and her son Paul I forced them to identify themselves by wearing yellow dresses.[6] In 1843, during the reign of Nicholas I, the Ministry of the Interior introduced the police-medical inspection system to prevent the further spread of sexually transmitted diseases. All prostitutes' passports were replaced with yellow passports, which they were required to carry at all times, and they were subject to regular medical examinations and stringent rules regarding dress, residence and mobility.

This yellow card effectively created a new underclass in Russian society.[7] Once women were registered as full-time prostitutes they became public women owned by the state and it was very difficult for them to earn a living by any other means. Corruption became rampant throughout the regulatory system and there evolved a social hierarchy among prostitutes; wealthy and educated prostitutes received better treatment than their poor, illiterate counterparts, and certain regulations were relaxed or ignored for upper-class women.[8]

Larionov's earliest known work with the term "prostitute" in the title is *Prostitute at the Hairdresser's*, *ca.* 1910 (Fig. 52).[9] In this painting

---

Vesy, 2, 1909, p. 108.
[5]Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, p. 183.
[6]Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters*, p. 3.
[7]Ibid., p. 22.
[8]Arkadii I. Elistratov, *O prikreplenii zhenshchiny k prostutsii* (Kazan, 1903), pp. 27–29. See Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters*, pp. 32–33.
[9]Kovtun dates *Prostitute at the Hairdresser's* to 1920, but he gives no evidence for this chronology. Kovtun, *Mikhail Larionov*, p. 49. Dualte et al. state that this work was exhibited unnumbered at the Donkey's Tail in 1912, but lists no source for this information either. Dualte et al., *Larionov Gontcharova*, cat. 40. Stylistically 1920 is a possible date as the work is more literal and less abstracted than Larionov's hairdresser

a young prostitute sits in front of a mirror at the hairdresser's while her hair is prepared for the evening ahead. Behind the central couple stands the hairdresser's assistant who combs out two hair extensions as a white cat stretches along her right leg. The reflections of the figures appear in the mirror before them.

The seated prostitute is scantily dressed in a corset and pantaloons. She is heavily made up, a characteristic trademark of public women. She appears relaxed, and holds a burning cigarette in her right hand. As already mentioned in Chapter II, smoking among women was viewed as a sign of immoral behaviour. Indeed, the daughter of a state official was arrested and labelled a "nocturnal butterfly" when she was seen smoking and talking loudly while walking with an actor friend after midnight.[10]

In *Prostitute at the Hairdresser's* the slit in the assistant's smock, which is repeated in the mirror, suggests female genitalia, reinforced by the tuft of hair hanging before the assistant. As will be discussed below, this motif reoccurs later in the bedclothes of Larionov's Venus paintings, and obviously refers to the woman's profession.

Larionov's *Ladies' Hairdresser* of 1909–10 is more stylized (Fig. 67). The setting of the salon is more lavish than that of the *Prostitute at the Hairdresser's*. This, together with the formality of the hairdresser's

---

paintings (e.g. *Officer at the Hairdresser's* and *Man at the Hairdresser's*). He also signed the work with the Roman and not the Cyrillic alphabet. This together with the combination of Russian and Cyrillic letters on the sign could indicate that the work was executed post-1915. The dating of this work will remain a mystery until it can be determined whether it was in fact exhibited at the Donkey's Tail in 1912. More central to the purposes of this discussion, however, are the visual motifs that Larionov used to identify the prostitute in the painting.

[10]The incident was reported in *Rossiia*, 162, 7 October 1899, p. 3; and *Vrach*, 42, 1891, p. 1251. See Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters*, p. 35.

suit suggests a high-class establishment. Her trappings, however, indicate that she is also a public woman. Like Larionov's previous prostitute, she sits in the hairdresser's chair wearing nothing more than a corset and slip, and holds a cigarette in her right hand. Again, rouge and eye make-up are clearly visible. This ladies' hairdresser, then, caters to public women as well.

The setting in the *Ladies' Hairdresser* is analogous to that of *Officer at the Hairdresser's* (Fig. 68). Both canvases feature curtains with tassels running across the top of the canvas, a dressing table and a tilted mirror. The hairdressers are also alike: both are dressed in a similar suit and feature a moustache. The woman's hairdresser, however, runs his fingers through her hair, producing a more sensual image. The relationship of this painting to *Prostitutes at the Hairdresser's* and the suggestive manner in which he runs his fingers through her hair makes clear that the woman portrayed is in fact a prostitute.

Although Larionov did not include the word prostitute in the titles of his subsequent works in this series, his audience would have readily identified Venus, Sonia and Mania as sexual transgressors. The term Venus was used in entertainment circles to identify public women. A contemporary report on restaurant prostitution related that: "For a generous 'tip' [prostitutes] are brought to the customer. The restaurant not only gives its guests a goblet from Bacchus, but one from Venus."[11] Sonia

[11]Robert Shikhman, "Tainaia prostitutsiia v S.-Peterburge," in *Trudy sezda po borbe s torgom zhenshchinami i ego prichinami proiskhodivshchage v S.-Peterburge s 21 do 25 aprelia 1910 goda*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1911–12), pp. 95 and 99. See Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters*, p. 51.

was the well-known prostitute in Fedor Dostoevskii's *Crime and Punishment*, while Mania was the heroine of Anastasia Verbitskaia's *The Keys to Happiness* who transgressed conventional gender boundaries and was treated as a social deviant as a result of her behaviour.

The majority of women in Russia were confined within the parameters of domestic life, which left domestic violence and sexual misconduct as their only paths to protest.[12] In the period leading up to the 1905 Revolution there was a perceived rise in crime committed by women that concentrated upon moral offences, including fornication, adultery, infanticide, child neglect and the murder of husbands and relatives.[13] This rise in female transgression was seen as a threat to patriarchy and considered especially disconcerting as women were the "measure of the social condition [for every society]."[14] These unconventional women were thought to place the existing social order in jeopardy, especially as females were responsible for imbuing their children with the mores of society.[15] If women could be forced to remain pure, then future generations of Russians would be protected. Consequently, Larionov, who took every opportunity to contradict accepted norms of behaviour and ideologies, painted these women in large numbers giving the works titles that would have made clear to his audience that they were in fact prostitutes. In 1910 the

---

[12]I. Ozerov, "Sravnitelnaia prestupnost polov v zavisimosti ot nekotorykh faktorov," *Zhurnal iuridicheskogo obshchestva pri Imperatorskom S-Peterburgskom Universitete*, 4, 1896, pp. 59 and 65. See Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, p. 101. For a look at the relationship between the patriarchy on women as the subject and aggressor of violence and crime, see Engelstein, Chapter 3.

[13]Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, pp. 99 and 101.

[14]I. Ozerov, "Sravnitelnaia prestupnost," p. 45. See Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, p. 100.

paediatrician Izrail Kankarovich told his colleagues that "...erotic art indisputably arouses the sexual instincts and makes people depraved."[16] Indeed, Larionov, in turn, provided the erotic images that caused depravity.

Sonia the Courtesan, 1912, was first exhibited at the 1912 Donkey's Tail exhibition in Moscow.[17] Parton states that the image reproduced under the same title in the series of Donkey's Tail postcards published by Kruchenykh in the summer of 1912 was based on this painting (Fig. 69).[18] In a review of the Donkey's Tail exhibition published in *Apollon* the critic Voloshin labelled this canvas as one of the most expressive works in the show.[19]

Here the prostitute Sonia lies on her side with her arms extended and folded above her head. Her elongated torso is cut off immediately below the pubic area by the blanket that covers her legs. Her head and shoulders rest upon a pillow. Its slit can be read as the same vaginal motif as in *Prostitute at the Hairdresser's*, which again recurs in *Katsap Venus* and *Jewish Venus*.[20] A cross lies next to the slit perhaps as reference to the fact that prostitutes saw no conflict between their profession and religion.

---

[15]V.M. Bekhterev, *O polovom ozdorovlenii* (St. Petersburg, 1910), p, 18. See Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, p. 248.

[16]Kankarovich, "O prichinami porstitutsii," *Trudy pervogo vserossiiskogo sezda po borbe s torgom zhenshchinami i ego prichinami*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1911), p. 190. See Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, p. 371.

[17]The Donkey's Tail catalogue lists two works, cat. 112 and 133, by Larionov entitled *Sonia the Camp Follower*.

[18]Parton, *Larionov*, pp. 43 and 227 n. 32.

[19]Voloshin, "Khudozhestvennya zhizn: Osliny khovst," *Apollon-Russkaia khudozhestvennaia letopis*, 7, April 1912, pp. 105–06.

[20]In the *Katsap Venus* and the *Jewish Venus* the slits in the pillowcases rendered in a deep red against the white linen leave no doubt that they are meant to be read as vaginas (Figs 77–79).

Religiosity as well as adherence to peasant superstitions were in fact common traits of prostitutes.[21]

The profile image of a moustached male smoking a pipe appears behind the woman to the right. Already in 1900 Freud had related pipes to male genitalia, and the reference seems to have been in paintings by other artists besides Larionov.[22] The pipe was a favourite phallic symbol of Edvard Munch's and in works such as *Tête-à-Tête*, 1895, the blowing of smoke at or across a woman suggests ejaculation (Fig. 70).[23] Larionov's work can be read along similar lines. In *Sonia the Courtesan* the man exhales the smoke from his pipe directly towards Sonia, as an indication that he and the woman have completed their sexual transaction. This motif also recurs in Larionov's work, as in the already mentioned *Woman in a Hat* (Fig. 53).

Larionov identified Sonia by means of *graffiti*, a device he also used on his contemporary soldier paintings. This use of text as a means of identification has its roots in religious icon painting, like *St. George and the Dragon*, a tradition Larionov debased by using it to identify a prostitute (Fig. 168). *Sonia kur*[*tzanka*], which translates to "Sonia the cour[tesan]," is scribbled in the far right corner. By identifying Sonia as a courtesan, this inscription also suggests the social status of her clients. The artist, then, used street art to single out both this woman of the boulevard and her

[21]See Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters*, pp. 167–171.
[22]Sigmund Freud, *Traumdeutung* (Leipzig and Vienna, 1900).
[23]Mitchell, "The Iconology of Smoking," p. 28.

high-class clientele.[24] If so, the painting speaks of the fact that the man who seeks the services of the woman is also the one who indicts her behaviour. Publicly, he embraces negative social attitudes against her, but privately he benefits from her sexual behaviour. The painting, then, seems to comment on the hypocritical attitude towards prostitution by bourgeois men.[25]

Contemporary data indicates that the overwhelming majority of prostitutes in pre-Revolutionary Russia hailed from three social groups: lower middle class [*meshchanki*], soldiers' wives and daughters [*soldatki*], and peasants.[26] These women fell into prostitution due to economic hardships. The lower middle class comprised artisans, peddlers, small shopkeepers and wage labourers who often had difficulty making ends meet, as did peasants. The *soldatki* were wives and daughters of conscripts who received low wages.[27] These women were often banished by their in-laws or they withheld their property once their husbands left for the military.[28]

---

[24]This work has also been labelled *Sonia the Whore*; however, this translation of kur[tzanka] loses the indirect indictment of the higher social class of her customers. Parton, *Larionov*, pp. 43 and 44.

[25]*Sonia the Courtesan* marks a departure from Larionov's previous depictions of the reclining female nude as demonstrated by *The Blue Nude, ca.* 1908, where a nude woman is shown sleeping in an unidentified setting (Fig. 71). In this earlier canvas the artist's sophisticated use of colour harmonies, strong brushwork and bold outline results in an intimate painting that recalls the mood of Gauguin's depictions of his Tahitian women, such as *Alone* [*Otahi*], 1893 (Fig. 72). Larionov used this visual vocabulary in *Portrait of Natalia Goncharova*, 1910, to engender the same warmth (Fig. 73).

[26]Richard Stites, "Prostitute and Society in Pre-Revolutionary Russia," *Järbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, vol. 31, 1983, p. 351; Barbara Alpern Engel, "St. Petersburg Prostitutes in the Late Nineteenth Century: A Personal and Social Profile," *The Russian Review*, vol. 48, 1989, p. 26; and Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters*, p. 18.

[27]Engel, "St. Petersburg Prostitutes," p. 26.

[28]Beatrice Farnsworth, "Litigious Daughter-in-Law: Family Relations in Rural Russia in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Cenutry," *Slavic Review*, 45, 1986, p. 56.

Larionov seems to have addressed each of these categories with his Venus paintings.[29] This group also depicts prostitutes of different nationalities, and contemporary critics noted that the artist included those characteristics by which each race distinguished its own ideal beauties.[30]

Whereas prostitutes were seen as symbols of victimization and the destructive nature of modern life, Larionov's women in this group do not appear to be victims.[31] Instead, prostitution appears to have freed them from the yoke of patriarchal authority. Whereas *Sonia the Courtesan* looks out at the viewer with a blank expression, the prostitute's stare becomes more emphatic in Larionov's later Venus images (e.g. *Katsap Venus* and *Jewish Venus*). In these works Larionov presented the viewer with women who are in control of their own sexuality and who meet the viewer's gaze confidently.

The theme of Venus has enjoyed a long tradition in high art. Venus, the goddess of love and fertility, has been used for several centuries by artists to represent a contemporary notion of idealized beauty. The red rose and the dove are customary attributes of the goddess, who is most commonly represented in either the ancient *Venus Pudica* [Venus of Modesty] pose or as the recumbent Venus, the latter of which originated with Giorgione in the fifteenth century.

---

[29]Larionov's Venus series includes the paintings *Boulevard Venus*, *Katsap Venus* and *Gypsy Venus*. He is also reputed to have executed a number of studies including *Soldiers' Venus*, *Moldavian Venus*, *Japanese Venus*, *Ukrainian Venus*, *Indian Venus*, *French Venus* and *Negro Venus*. The whereabouts of most of these works are currently unknown. "Venery M. Larionova," p. 6.

[30]Ibid.

[31]See Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters*, p. 8 and Chapter 6.

The *Venus of Urbino*, painted by Titian in 1538, is a classic example of this genre (Fig. 74). She is an idealized nude with smooth flesh. She lies across her bed and gazes out at the viewer coyly. Her head and upper body rest on a pillow and her lapdog lies at the foot of her bed. The curtain hanging in the left side of the canvas behind her torso acts as a foil and pushes her forward. In the background two servants are seen busy at a marriage chest. In her right hand she holds a bunch of flowers, while she demurely covers her pubic area with her left hand. Today the painting is thought to represent a marriage portrait.

Although Larionov's Venuses also assume this traditional reclining pose with the nude modestly covering her pubic area, they are not depicted as delicate women who could be regarded as both ladies and courtesans.[32] Larionov's are not idealized portrayals removed from contemporary women. On the contrary Larionov painted actual outsiders (i.e. Jews and Gypsies) and lower-class women (i.e. peasants) then considered deviants, and elevated them by portraying them in this traditional manner. In doing so, he updated established artistic conventions.

These works do not embody what his respectable bourgeois audience would have expected to find in a depiction on the theme of the female nude. The women portrayed in these works assume the recumbent pose of Venus and retain the symbols associated with her; but Larionov

[32]In the nineteenth century the *Venus of Urbino* was widely accepted as the representation of a courtesan. See, for example, H. Taine, *Voyage en Italie*, 2 vols (Paris, 1865), II, pp. 161–62; and N. Hawthorne, *French and Italian Notebooks*, 2 vols (London, 1871), II, p. 9.

used these revered elements of high art to depict contemporary local prostitutes instead of timeless classical beauties.

Larionov was not the first to do this. In the nineteenth-century Manet painted the famed *Olympia*, 1863–65, whose pose and much of its content derives from the *Venus of Urbino* (Fig. 75). Exhibited at the Paris *Salon* in 1865 where it met with unprecedented hostility, Manet's painting depicts a recognizable female model in the conventional recumbent Venus pose. Olympia is obviously a prostitute, indicated by her jewellery and the fanciful slippers, as well as her name, commonly used by French prostitutes in the nineteenth century. A large black servant fills the background presenting to Olympia the flowers that her caller has delivered. The curled sleeping lapdog has been replaced with a black cat who arches its back at the foot of the bed. Whereas Titian's dog symbolizes fidelity, Manet's cat represents fornication.

The outrage caused by Manet's canvas was certainly known in Russia. In 1909 Grabar mentioned the Parisian audiences' fury at *Olympia* and the subsequent scandals that ensued:

> [Matisse] does not possess the genius of Manet although his works were being compared to Manet's by Parisian audiences, who in the salon, in front of Matisse's pictures, indignantly the bourgeois were already crying, while waving their umbrellas, 'You will see that it will be at the Louvre, since that villain *Olympia* is there already!'[33]

The hostility provoked by Manet's canvas would have appealed to the scandalmonger Larionov. It is almost certain that this reception of Manet's

[33]Grabar, "Moskovskia vystavki," p. 105.

painting figured in Larionov's deliberate choice of prostitutes based on traditional depictions of Venus as subject matter.

Like *Olympia*, Larionov's Venus images can be seen as the contemporary Russian representation of the goddess of love.[34] As Isarlov pointed out, "Larionov's achievement was that he discarded the 'Venus' of the elect and created a real popular goddess of love. Larionov's Venus is a replete, sweating prostitute with heavily painted cheeks and thin hair."[35] The goddess of love revered in the academic world of high art has become a prostitute.[36] Like Manet's Olympia, Larionov's Venus prostitutes provoked a hypocritical hostile reaction from an audience who relied on prostitutes for sexual gratification.

Katsap Venus, 1912, is the first Venus painting exhibited by Larionov (Fig. 77).[37] In this canvas the recumbent unclothed woman lies facing the viewer on a bed across the front of the picture in a similar manner to both *Olympia* and the *Venus of Urbino*, albeit in reverse. The position of her legs and arms also allude to these works. In her left hand she holds a red flower, and a cat rests at her feet.

---

[34]Theodore Reff, *Manet: Olympia* (New York, 1976), p. 57.
[35]G.I. Isarlov, "M.F. Larionov," *Zhar Ptitsa*, 12, 1923, p. 3.
[36]Larionov blatantly illustrated the sanctimonious nature of his urban bourgeois audience in five pastels that clearly depict "gentlemen" cavorting with prostitutes in rather seedy-looking establishments. In works such as *Adoration*, *ca.* 1909–10, the artist presented a humorous depiction of the dandy with his own personal Venus (Fig. 76). In his depictions of prostitutes Larionov alluded to the hypocrisy of a service that was widely used but publicly condemned. Although these works are not dated, the bold style in which they are executed, the similarity of the male figures to those found in works such as *Officer at the Hairdresser's* and the Cyrillic inscription suggest they may have been executed *ca.* 1909–10. It is possible that they were exhibited in 1912 at the Donkey's Tail under the heading "Pastels", cat. 87–93. Unfortunately, documentary evidence and photographs which would serve to clarify this matter are, to my knowledge, unavailable.
[37]Larionov exhibited the work entitled *Katsap Woman* [*katsapka*] (cat. 155a) at the Moscow World of Art exhibition in December 1912 as well as at the January 1913 venue

Although Larionov used the vocabulary found in Titian's *Venus of Urbino* and Manet's *Olympia*, he made several amendments to this theme. In this work, as in his subsequent versions, the figure is neither in the luxurious setting of Titian's *Venus* nor is she in the bourgeois surroundings of Manet's *Olympia*; instead she is situated in a rather humble environment. The attendant has been removed, and the flowers reduced to a single bloom. The wedding chest is also gone, and the jewellery reduced to a gold band on Venus' finger and hoop earrings. The placement of the band on her ring finger would denote that she is married, hence perhaps the wife of a conscript who resorts to prostitution for survival. Therefore, this painting provides a social commentary on the situation of these women.

Female sexuality was considered an eighteenth-century Western import anomalous to Russia's mythic elevation of maternity and maternal asexuality.[38] Sexual urges were considered unnatural for Russian women, who were believed to lack inherent sex drives and only engaged in sex for reproductive purposes. Emotional expression and pleasure were not thought to enter into their motivation for engaging in intercourse. Preoccupation with sexuality was seen as indicative of the corruption of Western life and a threat to the purity of Russia, a position advanced by the Orthodox Church.

The origins of this theological stance can be traced back to the Slavs, who Eve Levin maintains "developed a negative view of sexuality

---

of this show in St. Petersburg (cat. 205). In February 1913 he changed the name to *Katsap Venus*, cat. 95, for the Kiev World of Art.

in theory and a broad system of constraints on its manifestation in practice.... Once accepted [by the lay community], this approach to matters sexual became self-perpetuating and extraordinarily tenacious."[39] The State concurred with the Church in this matter as the Tsar considered himself the father of the Russian people, and his responsibility as patriarch was to protect both Orthodoxy and morality.[40] As a result, the subject matter of sexually active women who unabashedly gaze at the viewer would have been considered shocking.

The cat in *Katsap Venus* is stylistically grounded upon the *lubok* image of *The Kazan Cat*, a political image parodying Peter the Great (Fig. 78). As Peter's aggressive policy of Westernization included ending the social seclusion of women and encouraging social interaction between the sexes, the cat in Larionov's painting therefore refers to the unrealistic notion of female sexuality as a Western import. The cat also refers to pimping. In pre-Revolutionary Russian slang prostitutes were called princesses and pimps were referred to as cats.[41]

Katsap Venus can be translated as *The Squaddy's Venus*.[42] *Katsap* [butcher] is a pejorative term used by Ukranians to describe Great Russian soldiers of the occupation, the local prostitutes' most regular customers.[43] The title of the work indicates that the subject is a Ukrainian woman who

---

[38]Jane T. Costlow, S. Sandler and Judith Vowles, "Introduction," *Sexuality and the Body in Russian Culture*, pp. 6, 18 and 21; and Levin, "Sexual Vocabulary in Medieval Russia," p. 41.
[39]Levin, *Sex and Society*, p. 35.
[40]Bernstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, p. 28.
[41]Joseph Bradley, "'Once You've Eaten Khitrov Soup You'll Never Leave!': Slum Renovation in Late Imperial Russia," *Russian History/Historie Russe*, 11, 1984, p. 9.
[42]Lodder, *Russian Painting of the Avant-Garde*, p. 13.
[43]Ibid., and Parton, *Larionov*, p. 52.

tends to the sexual needs of the Great Russian army.[44] Here Larionov may be suggesting that the Great Russians not only occupied the Ukrainian's land, but also used their women for sexual gratification.

Jewish Venus, also executed in 1912, is similar in composition to the *Katsap Venus*, and it also likely depicts a prostitute who caters to soldiers (Fig. 79). The artist again presented the viewer with a reclining unclothed female lying on a bed occupying most of the picture plane. She leans against a number of pillows and her left forearm rests against the table covered by a white cloth adjacent to the bed. In her right hand she holds a fan, which she uses to cover her pubic area. On the green wall behind her hangs a red rose, a conventional emblem of Venus, and four photographs.

In painting a Jewish woman in the guise of a classical goddess, Larionov once again seems to have touched upon the theme of national oppression. The Russian philosopher Vasilii Rozanov viewed the apocryphal lasciviousness of the Jews as a threat to the sexual morality of Christian Orthodoxy, and he wrote extensively on this subject in two books and his regular column for the newspaper *New Time* [*Novoe vremia*].[45] He argued that gentiles needed protection from Jewish men who were thought to force girls into prostitution, white slavery and the mythic blood rituals that were linked with sexual perversion. This latter

---

[44]In 1915 a drawing of *Katsap Venus* was published as *La Venere del Soldato* [*The Soldier's Venus*] in the Italian journal *Lacerba*. *Lacerba*, 15, 10 April 1915, Anno III, p. 110.

[45]Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, p. 303.

view surged in popularity during the Belis affair of 1911 in which an artesan was erroneously accused of ritually killing Christian children.[46]

Like prostitutes and progressive women who deviated from the sexual stereotypes, Jews were seen to pose a threat to the purity of Russian society. Otto Weininger, a baptized Austrian Jew, published his doctoral dissertation entitled *Sex and Character* in Russia in 1909. The anti-Semitic text related current sexual problems to women's and Jews' uncontrolled libidinous desire. He found both women and Jews incapable of reason, and only through the reasoned judgement of Christian males, to whom he referred as "civil society," would society be able to rise above this. Both Judaism and feminism posed a serious threat to the "masculine principles of rational self restraint" and therefore it had to be eradicated in the interest of survival. Weininger's treatise proved popular in Russia, especially amongst university students, so much so that between 1909 and 1912 at least 21,000 copies of this academic text were published. Although there was outcry about his attitudes towards women, there was virtually no negative reaction to his anti-Semitism.[47]

Jewish women were seen as filthy creatures, and this view is best represented by a contributor to the medical journal of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, who wrote in the late 1860s: "the Jews are the most slovenly of nations. Jewish prostitutes are the same: on the surface, silk;

[46]Ibid., pp. 300–301.
[47]Ibid., p. 301–302 and n9, 310–11.

underneath, filth in all its splendour."[48] Clearly Larionov's *Jewish Venus* again confronts the audience with a social outcast depicted in traditional terms. She is crudely represented with marks left by her stockings and dirty toenails.

Jewish Venus recalls Gauguin's *The Queen, The King's Wife*, 1896, which Larionov would have seen in Shchukin's collection or from the article Tugendkhold wrote in 1910 on the tradition of the nude in French art (Fig. 80).[49] Gauguin's canvas depicts a reclining nude lying in a tropical setting, holding a fan behind her head and a cloth in her left hand that covers her pubic area. Ripe mangoes in the foreground allude to her fertility. This painting has also been related to Manet's *Olympia*, which Gauguin copied and caricatured in his notebook.

The fan in Gauguin's work has been viewed as indicating the woman's royal descent, and as an instrument of temptation.[50] The figure in *Jewish Venus* uses the fan and not her hand to cover her pubic area, also suggesting temptation. Picasso in his *Woman with A Fan*, 1908 (also known as *After the Ball*), used the fan in a similar manner (Fig. 81). The fan recurs in his *Woman with a Fan*, both of 1908 (Fig. 82). Both paintings were located in the Shchukin collection.

---

[48]N. B—skii, "Ocherk prostitutsii v Peterburge," *Arkhiv sudebnoi meditsiny iobshchestvennoi gigieny*, 4, 1868, pp. 73–74. See Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, p. 307.

[49]Shchukin acquired this work in 1910. Shchukin held open houses on Sundays which Larinov often attended. See Beverley Whitney Kean, *French Painters, Russian Collectors: Shchukin, Morozov and Modern French Art, 1890–1914* (London, 1994), chapter 8. Tugendkhold, "Nagota – vo Franstuzskom iskusstv," *Apollon*, 11, 1910, pp. 17–29.

[50]A. Kantor-Gukovskaia, *Paul Gauguin in Soviet Museums*, trans by A. Mikoyan (Leningrad, 1988), p. 113.

The candle on the bedside table has been extinguished earlier as indicated by the burnt wick. Similar to the smoke from a cigarette, the blown out candle possibly suggests that ejaculation has taken place by implying that a client has recently called. The candle is a recurring motif in Larionov's painting. Already in the late 1890s the artist had placed a candle in *Women*, a drawing that clearly depicts a brothel scene, and he also used it in *Morning*, *ca.* 1908–10, where a nude woman stands in front of an open window (Figs 62 and 83).[51] The candle in this last work, unlike the one found in *Jewish Venus*, is lit, which may suggest that intercourse has not yet occurred. The candle is the object closest to the viewer, and its prominent position indicates its importance for the narrative.

In *Jewish Venus* four photographs adorn the wall. The one furthest to the left depicts an older woman in profile, perhaps the prostitute's mother. A young woman finely dressed and wearing a hat appears in the next image, which may be a photograph of the prostitute herself, indicating that she has a life outside of prostitution. The lower picture is framed and depicts a soldier in uniform. The last photo is indecipherable.

Parton argues that the soldier photograph indicates that the prostitute works for the army and that this is one of her clients.[52] It seems unlikely, however, that she would have kept this image of a client with the other, more personal mementoes. It is perhaps more plausible to suggest

[51]This work was first exhibited in December 1911 at The Union of Youth in St. Petersburg. In 1914 Larionov listed the date of this work as 1908 in the catalogue for his and Goncharova's exhibition at the Galerie Paul Guillaume in Paris; however, he predated the majority of canvases in this exhibition. Stylistically, *Morning* appears to belong to *ca.* 1910–11.
[52]Parton, *Larionov*, p. 52.

that this is a photograph of her partner or husband who is a soldier. If so, Larionov is again presenting the viewer with a *soldatki*, as in his *Katsap Venus*.

Gypsy Venus, 1912–13, marks a departure in the presentation of this theme by Larionov (Fig. 84). In this highly stylized painting a young girl lies in an unidentified setting. She lies on a sheet with her head and shoulder resting against two pillows. A small round table with a jug holding a flower is before her. Behind the Gypsy, a *putto* pulls the sheet upon which she lies to reveal her nudity, and a bird flies down towards her with an envelope in its mouth. In the background is an abstract, child-like drawing of a bush and the word *Ven/era* [Ven/us], written in two lines. In the foreground "1912g" [the year 1912] and "Mikhail" are written. There is also a feather-like image with large dots on either side.

The figure in *Gypsy Venus* is younger than the women depicted in *Katsap Venus* and *Jewish Venus*. She wears her hair in braids, a style that was only worn by young, unmarried girls in pre-Revolutionary Russia. Her breasts also appear slightly underdeveloped, and are delineated in a crude, child-like flattened style. No doubt Larionov sought to comment on the young age of some prostitutes.

The jug containing the flower in the conventional vocabulary of classical art is used to symbolize the uterus.[53] The flower contained in this vessel/uterus may refer to the sexual blossoming of this young girl.

---

[53]Op cit.

The hovering bird is likely a dove, an attribute of Venus. Larionov appears to have replaced the smoke as seen in *Sonia the Courtesan* and *Woman in a Hat* with this dove, who flies towards Venus with a letter in its beak, no doubt a calling card announcing the young woman's next client. This interpretation is supported by a later pochoir from *Voyage en Turquie*, *ca.* 1928, where Larionov combined the smoke motif with the bird imagery, suggesting an analogous relationship between the two (Fig. 85).

The dove flying towards a woman is also associated with the Virgin Mary of *The Annunciation* who is impregnated by the Holy Spirit, symbolized by a dove flying towards her (Fig. 86). Larionov in the *gypsy Venus* transformed this holy symbol into a profane allusion to intercourse.

Parton states that the winged figure flying above Venus may represent a guardian spirit that guides shamans to the heavens.[54] It is also possible that this bird represents Alkonost who, together with Siren, was one of the two Birds of Paradise. A favourite character in Russian *lubki* and folk art, Alkonost is the bird of temptation and sorrow and she is known for granting pleasures for which men trade their lives.[55] In the *lubok Alkonost and Siren, the Birds of Paradise*, late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, Alkonost holds a branch and a scroll in her hands, which Larionov appears to have translated to the envelope in the bird's beak and the stylized branch on the opposite side of the canvas (Fig. 87). By referring to this well-known character in Russian folklore, Larionov

[54]Parton, *Larionov*, p. 107.

may be suggesting that the men who turn to this young goddess will in turn experience sorrow.

Boulevard Venus, 1913, is later and further removed form the academic tradition than the other works in this series (Fig. 88). In this painting Larionov did not depict the female figure in the reclining *Venus Pudica* pose; rather the viewer is confronted with the image of a striding woman carrying a parasol. A street lamp is located in the upper right corner, which places the image squarely in an urban context. The simultaneous viewpoints depicted by Larionov denote the frantic pace of this anonymous urban setting. His use of bright colours, aggressive brushwork and strong force lines result in a expressive work that is firmly rooted in Neo-primitivsim, but one that also alludes to his contemporary Rayist experiments. The inclusion of the street lamp indicates that the woman in this painting is on an "evening stroll," a common way of supplementing poorly paid service jobs held by peasants who came to the city in search of gainful employment.[56]

During this period Larionov executed several paintings that featured these moonlighters. Similar to those found in nineteenth-century French Realist and Impressionist canvases, these women would have been readily identifiable as public women by his Russian audience. In *The Waitress*, 1911, a buxom waitress is seen speaking to a respectable looking

---

[55]Alla Sytova, *The Lubok: Russian Folk Pictures, 17th to 19th Century* (Leningrad, 1984), p. [96].

[56]Ariadna V. Tyrkova, "O zhenskom trude i prostitutsii," in *Trudy sezda po borbe s torgom zhenshchinami i ego prichinami proiskhodivshchago v S. Peterburge s 21 do 25 aprelia 1910 goda*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1911–12) p. 166. See Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters*, p.118.

gentleman who has apparently stopped while carrying a chair to a nearby table (Fig. 89). A woman watches the interchange from the background. She may be his companion as indicated by the absence of a second chair coupled with the presence of a bottle and two glasses on the table before her. The waitress and the gentleman stand in close proximity, almost touching one another. Her hand is in her apron pocket, which could possibly allude to penetration. His nervous-looking companion watches the interchange, and this suggests that Larionov may have been highlighting the hypocrisy of bourgeois men who returned home to their wives after visiting public women.

Places of prostitution were known to be tacky; everything, according to one contemporary source, appeared "vulgar, gaudy, colourful, dirty, jaded."[57] However, "they must have represented the height of luxury to a girl from a remote village or urban slum."[58] Likewise the cheap clothes and makeup that comprised the prostitutes' uniform must have appealed to these vulnerable girls and women. The colourful clothing of the woman in *Boulevard Venus* indicates that she may be a relocated peasant who is supplementing her income through prostitution.

Larionov employed a flamboyant palette to depict the prostitute's trappings. The woman exhibits the readily identifiable signs of her trade. Her painted lips, rosy cheeks and brightly coloured finery mock the

[57]M.S. Onchukova, "O polozhenii prostitutok v Odesse," *Trudy Odesskago otdela Russikago obshchestva okhraneniia zdraviia*, vol. 4, 1904, pp. 56–57. See also Arutuin A. Melik-Pashaev, "Prostitutsiia v gorode Baku," *Svedeniia mediko-sanitarnago biuro goroda Baku* (November–December 1913), pp. 847–49. See Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters*, pp. 152–53.
[58]Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters*, p. 153.

decorous behaviour of the proper lady.[59] Although she is dressed, her breasts, corset, pantaloons and even her leg bones are exposed through transparent areas in her clothing. This also betrays the artist's current interest in X-rays.[60]

A number of contemporary scientists regarded female submissiveness as healthy behaviour, whereas aggressive, or more likely self-assertive, conduct was considered deviant.[61] Women who exhibited assertive behaviour – either sexual or non-sexual – were seen as prostitutes.[62] Prostitutes were reputed to sing dirty songs and play bawdy games. It was reported that prostitutes in Moscow "impudently badger[ed] male passers-by and importunately offer[ed] their services, spewing foul language, pushing those they [came] across, squabbling with cab drivers and amongst themselves."[63]

In *Boulevard Venus* the female figure's head is depicted in motion as demonstrated by its multiple representations of her lips and nose. It appears that Larionov has recorded her in the act of turning her head to eye up or greet a potential client. Her open legs are also shown in motion. On the right she raises one of them and reveals it to entice the prospective

---

[59]Ibid., p. 2.
[60]Larionov's copy of Italo Tonta's *Raggi di Röntgen e loro Pratiche Applicazioni* (Milan, 1898) is currently located in the Larionov Collection at the National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. It is unknown whether Larionov acquired this text before he went to Italy in 1914.
[61]Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, p. 150.
[62]Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughter's*, p. 8.
[63]Iurii Iu. Tatarov, "Postanovka prostitutsii v gorode Moskve," in *Trudy pervago vserossisskago sezda po borbe s torgom zhenshchinami i ego prichinami proiskhodivshchago v S.-Peterburge s 21 do 25 aprelia 1910 goda*, vol. 2 (St. Petersburg, 1911), pp. 396–97. See Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters*, p. 1.

client. Her breasts are also exposed for the same reason. This painting, then, can be seen as a narrative of the prostitute's search for her client.

The four letters *A*, *K* / *E*, *B* [A, K, E, V] in the upper left of the canvas appear unrelated at first glance; however, these seemingly disparate elements can be arranged to form the expression "Eva K." Eva, the Russian for Eve, refers to the first fallen woman, and K stands for *kurtzanka* [courtesan]. Similar to the *graffiti* in his earlier painting *Sonia the Cour*[*tesan*] [*Sonia kur*{*tzanka*}] where the artist abbreviated the word to its first three letters, Larionov here reduced the word to only its initial letter.[64] Through this he equated the Biblical Eve with prostitution.

The term boulevard came to be associated with a sensational form of journalism that appealed to a wide urban audience.[65] By the end of the nineteenth century so-called boulevard newspapers focused primarily upon the more negative aspects of urban life: crime, ignominy and misfortune were among the favourite topics covered. The expression also extends to the contemporary fiction and serial instalments that also proved popular with audiences. Boulevard publications were seen as a form of low culture for those who had neither the wealth nor the education to contend with the tradition of fine literature. However, members of the bourgeoisie, who loved scandal, were also attracted to them. In *Boulevard Venus*, then,

---

[64]John Malmstad also notices that these letters can be arranged into the name Eva; however, he fails to decipher the connection between the letter "K" and the word courtesan. John E. Malmstad, "The Sacred Profaned: Image and Word in the Paintings of Mikhail Larionov," in *Laboratory of Dreams: The Russian Avant-Garde and Cultural Experiment*, ed. by Bowlt and O. Matich (Stanford, 1996), p. 172.
[65]Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read*, p. 118.

Larionov showed prostitution at the boulevard, notions associated with scandal and behaviour that supposedly threatened society.

In the years following the 1905 Revolution the subject of sex became more prominent in literature and popular culture.[66] The press began to cover controversial issues such as contraception and abortion, and advertisements for products that had been previously unmentionable such as cures for venereal diseases, impotence and masturbation; corsets and other means of developing a more beautiful bust; and pornographic photographs, which soon became commonplace.[67] The boulevard press was also in part responsible for this type of advertising. "Along with freedom of the press, however limited it may be," one critic wrote in 1908, "the bourgeois revolution [of 1905] had introduced certain other traits of the European press – the boulevard and advertisement."[68] All of these references to sexuality, along with displays in store windows, films and books, were blamed for inciting lewd behaviour in young men.[69] Larionov's *Woman in a Blue Corset*, 1910, seems based upon the newspaper advertisements for women's undergarments. In fact, when it was shown at the Donkey's Tail exhibition in Moscow in 1291, its title was indicated to be *Woman with a Blue Corset (newspaper*

---

[66]Avant-garde writers and poets had began experimenting with sexual images by the turn of the century, and novels that presented alternatives to the existing sexual mores and the role of women in society, such as Michael Artzibashev's, *Sanine* trans. by P. Pinkerton (New York, 1926) and Anna Verbitskaia's, *Kliuchi schastia,* 6 vols (Moscow, 1910–13), became increasingly popular. See Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, pp. 267 and 387.

[67]The press coverage on birth control and abortion, according to Engelstein, exposed "opinions about women's control over their reproductive lives [and] constituted not only a critique of the existing political order but blueprints for a new and better one." Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, p. 337.

[68]L. Gerasimov, "Nasha literatura i pressa posle revoliutsii," *Obraovanie*, 2, sec. 3, 1908, p. 9. See Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, p. 360.

advertisement).[70] In view of this, Larionov's painting would have been perceived by the audience to be as scandalous and threatening as the pornographic material and sexual advertisements, particularly to the young. Indeed, Goncharova's 1910 trial for pornography mentioned in Chapter I resulted in part from the fact that her works were falsely rumoured to have been viewed by impressionable youth. Larionov no doubt sought to exploit this fear by devoting a large number of paintings to the theme of prostitution.

Alison Hilton has related umbrellas to "the rain and fertility associated on a very deep level with [the pagan goddess] *Mokosh* or Mother Moist Earth."[71] Here again in the *Boulevard Venus* it appears that Larionov linked the prostitute with folklore. These pagan divinities also found their way into Christian lore in the Byzantine Mother of God, which suggests that with the inclusion of this motif Larionov again juxtaposed references to the sacred Virgin with the profane practice of prostitution.[72] The subversive nature of *Boulevard Venus* was noticed by contemporary viewers. In a review of the 1913 Moscow World of Art [*Mir iskusstvo*] exhibition, Tugendkhold found this painting vulgar and stated that it was

---

[69]Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, pp. 267 and 368.
[70]Cat. 140.
[71]Hilton, *Russian Folk Art*, p. 178.
[72]Ibid., p. 142. Joanna Hubbs, *Mother Russia: The Feminine Myth in Russian Culture* (Bloomington, 1988), pp. 87–123. *Boulevard Venus* marks a departure from Larionov's earlier striding females, as seen in *Provincial Coquette*, 1909 (Fig. 90). In this later work, Larionov no longer used broad areas of colour to impart a flattened image; instead he filled the canvas with action with his dynamic choppy brushwork. This is the frantic pace of the city boulevard as opposed to the *Provincial Coquette*'s promenade in a quiet provincial town. Whereas the provincial woman wears conventional, respectable attire, as seen by the high collar, long sleeves and skirt that covers the majority of her flesh, her urban counterpart is clearly anything but respectable. With *Boulevard Venus* Larionov

not derived from folk art and native sources but was clearly produced in an anarchic spirit.[73]

During 1912 Larionov also painted female nudes that assumed a spiritual dimension. For this group he again borrowed from the tradition of the primitive, including popular pagan belief. The works included in this second category of female nudes are *Mania*, *ca.* 1912, *Spring 1912*, 1912; *The Whore*, 1913, and the *Seasons* cycle, 1912–13.

Mania, *ca.* 1912, presents the frontal three-quarter image of a female nude, who stands before the viewer with a laconic expression on her face (Fig. 91). Her hair is flat and close to her head and her body is also somewhat asymmetrical in the placement of her shoulders and the differing eyes and breasts. Larionov again included the smoking man on the upper right. This along with the curtain on the left, which suggests a bedroom setting, reveals that this is also a scene involving commercial sex.

On the lower right Larionov identified the young woman as Mania, a name that, as indicated earlier, referred to the heroine in Verbitskaia's *The Keys to Happiness*, treated as a social deviant for transgressing conventional boundaries. In addition, the name Mania can be traced to both Roman mythology, where she is the guardian of spirits of the dead, and Shamanism, where the name is used to identify the Shaman's costume as well as the figures that hang from it. In fact, both systems of belief also apply the term to dolls that serve ritual functions.[74] Indeed Mania's rigid

---

addressed the contemporary notion of the boulevard, and turned his attention to its more licentious side.

[73]Tugendkhold, "Moskovskiia vystavki," *Apollon*, 1–2, 1914, p. 140.

[74]Parton, *Larionov*, pp. 108–10.

nude frontal pose recalls that of wooden statues used for this purpose, like the Angmasgsalik example (Fig. 92). Larionov, then, seems to be presenting the viewer with the new goddess of contemporary society.[75]

Mania the Bitch, published 1928, was also inspired by these indigenous works (Fig. 93). Here the figure has been reduced and flattened to a series of lines. Her hair is abstracted to a tuft on top of her head. Her facial features have been minimized, while her womanly attributes of earrings and genitalia have been accentuated, particularly her pubic area. This emphasis and the spread of her legs is similar to that of the native totemic statues of fertility (Fig. 94).[76]

The figure in Larionov's work is surrounded by *graffiti*-like inscriptions: *Mania* to the figure's left and *kurva* [whore] to her right. *Kurva* can also be translated as "bitch," hence most scholars now label this work as *Mania the Bitch*.[77] So here again Larionov called upon the dual nature of the term Mania, juxtaposing the sacred and the profane, goddess and whore.

---

[75]The dating of *Mania* is problematic; it has been placed in Larionov *oeuvre* from 1907–09 to 1928. The work has been attributed to 1907–09 in *Twentieth-Century Russian Paintings, Drawings and Watercolours, 1900–1930* (London, 1972); to *ca.* 1912 by Marian Burliegh-Motley in Gray, *The Russian Experiment*, p. 108; and to 1928 by Parton, *Larionov*, p. 110. See also Kovtun, *Mikhail Larionov*, p. 103. Stylistically, 1907–09 is too early. Larionov had not yet included text in his works at this time. Parton bases his attribution of 1928 to the year of publication of a series of drawings entitled *Voyage en Turque*. But, Larionov had exhibited works on Turkish themes as early as 1911, and it is possible that this pochoir, or a similar work, may have been executed earlier. At his 1911 retrospective in Moscow Larionov exhibited *Turkish Idyll* (cat. 58), which he dated to 1906–07.

[76]Parton, *Larionov*, p. 109.

[77]Malmstad states that the word *kurva* "could be translated as 'whore' or 'bitch' or 'slut' (*putain*)..." Malmstad, "The Sacred Profaned," p. 167. Parton states that "... *Manya* is the diminutive of *Mariya* and, in association with the word *kurva*, means 'Mary the bitch,'..." Parton, *Larionov*, p. 109.

Larionov continued this theme in *The Whore*, *ca.* 1913 (Fig. 95). A similar armless female nude stands in this work with her legs astride, her prominent vagina is represented frontally. On her right is the inscription *bl/ad*, which is the phonetic spelling of the word whore, a "...word for woman [that] is even more coarse [than *kurva*] (and, until very recently, totally unprintable) in Russian."[78] Next to her left ear, in the position traditionally held by the smoking man or the bird, is an abstracted drawing of an animal, most likely Larionov's usual pig, surrounded by the date 1913.[79] This pig is also found in his *Spring 1912*, again to indicate a rural setting (Fig. 96).

In *Spring 1912* Larionov presented the figure in bust form (Fig. 96). Stylized trees derived from *lubki* and icons are scattered throughout the background. The recurring motif of the bird descending towards the woman is also present.

The blossoming tree in this painting can also be read as a stylized version of the tree of life, which derives from *lubki* and refers to the traditions of folk art and lore. It also suggests fertility and the pagan divinity *Mokosh* or Mother Moist Earth.[80] The figure then allegorically represents Spring, hence fertility, while still surrounded by the references to prostitution, like Larionov's recurring motif of the descending bird.

The bulbous head and thick neck of this woman, along with her elongated nose, her smile and accentuated breasts, derives from ancient

---

[78]Malmstad, "The Sacred Profaned," p. 167.
[79]If this is in fact a dog then the inclusion of the word bitch in *Mania the Bitch* could also suggest that Larionov again engaged in a bit of word play with his audience.
[80]Hilton, *Folk Art*, pp. 178–81.

stone *baba* sculpture native to the southern Russian Steppe. It is known that Larionov displayed a keen interest in these primitive idols. In addition to their motivated interest in Eastern ethnography, both Larionov and Goncharova were advocates of this indigenous art form. According to a notice in *The Donkey's Tail and Target* [*Osliny khvost i mishen*], in 1913 Larionov intended to write a book about *baba* in *Russian Art* [*Russkoe iskusstvo*] with Sergei Khudakov.[81] Goncharova often spoke about the artistic integrity of *baba*, most famously during her impromptu speech at the first Knave of Diamonds debate in 1912 where she traced the origins of Cubism to this Eastern tradition.[82]

Isarlov acknowledges Larionov's debt to "ancient stone figures of women."[83] This connection was obvious to his audience, as demonstrated by one critic who in 1910 described one of Larionov's sculpted wooden works as "a stone *baba* of an antediluvian man."[84] Goncharova's *Still Life with Pineapple*, 1908, *Kamennia Baba*, 1908, and *Pillars of Salt*, 1909, clearly demonstrate the influence of *baba* on her Neo-primitivist canvases (Figs 29, 97 and 98). This regard for indigenous stone *baba* was to remain with Larionov even after he emigrated from Russia to Paris. While in Paris the artist acquired a photograph of two recently excavated *babas*.[85]

Another likely primitive source for *Spring 1912* is ivory and bone Eskimo amulets, the origins of which can be traced to Shamanism (Figs

---

[81]*Osliny khvost i mishen*, 1913, p. 153.
[82]Livshits, *The One and a Half-Eyed Archer*, pp. 82–84.
[83]Isarlov, "M.F. Larionov," p. 2.
[84]"Vystavka 'Soyuz molodezhi II'," *Rizhskaia mysl*, 871, 28 June 1910, p. 3.
[85]This photograph is currently located in the Larionov Collection at the National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

99a–99b). These figurines also possess accentuated smiles, noses and ears, features that are also exaggerated in Larionov's female.[86] He also emphasized the nipples in a similar fashion.

In four *Seasons* canvases of 1912–13 by Larionov each nude represents an individual pagan goddess in celebration of the peasant cycle of the year (Figs 101–104). The sexuality of these goddesses is minimized as Larionov did not denote the details of their female anatomies. Instead he imbued them with attributes of their season and added visual motifs familiar to the artist's audience, e.g. nudes, barnyard animals, the flying dove, the tree of life and *graffiti*. These works are amongst his most pictorially and ideologically developed Neo-primitivist canvases inspired by the spontaneity of children's art.

Each canvas is divided asymmetrically into four sections. The lower two quadrants represent the mortal world of peasants. The *graffiti* in the lower half of the painting describes each season and their attributes have been turned into prose; however, the artist still incorporated the phonetic misspellings and mix of lettering styles that characterized his earlier works. Alongside this prose Larionov provided a visual explanation of the peasant rituals associated with each season.

The upper half of the canvases denote the spiritual heavens of the pagan gods and goddesses and their attributes. Larionov presented his alternative version of Flora with her trees in bloom in *Spring*; Ceres with her corn and fruit in *Summer*; Bacchus with his wine in *Autumn*, Boreas

[86] *Happy Autumn*, 1912, by Larionov is a more abstracted version of *Spring 1912*

the cold wind with a wrap for warmth and the lines of wind motion in *Winter*.[87] Regardless of their actual gender, Larionov represented each as a woman denoted by earrings and in some instances by hairstyle.

These women, although completely related to the prostitutes who are Larionov's new fertility goddesses, are no longer aggressive sexual images. Instead they refer to the fertility of the earth and rebirth. They are therefore more spiritual in nature.

3.3 Conclusion

Larionov's depictions of the female nude between 1912 and 1913 include paintings of prostitutes that broke away from conventional idealized representations established by the Russian art academy; and paintings that provide alternative contemporary goddesses based upon native Russian deities and superstitions.

Prostitutes were considered sexual deviants who posed a threat to Russian society as a whole, and Larionov seems to have used his Venus paintings to denote the hypocrisy of existing sexual mores. Larionov's representations are raw and aggressive. These are not victims, but rather contemporary women who unabashedly gaze at the viewer and who have freed themselves from the yoke of patriarchal authority. At the same time, these works speak of the women's difficult situation. *Katsap Venus*, *Jewish Venus*, *Gypsy Venus* and *Boulevard Venus* comment on the plight of Ukrainian, Jewish, Gypsy and rural women respectively.

(Fig. 100). Here Larionov used yellow, the colour of the prostitute's identifying ticket, to

The paintings in the second category represent a break from his provocative use of the female nude, and these works can be read as marking the rebirth of the female nude in art, through which Larionov provided a relevant contemporary female goddess. In these works the images take on a more spiritual dimension as they are based upon totems and ancient fertility deities.

Larionov was unique in this approach to the subject of the female nude. The artist's unorthodox treatment challenged the viewer's conception of the classical nude, prostitution and sexuality, as well as the role of women within the established Russian patriarchy. Goncharova's response to the role of women within the patriarchal system will be the subject of the next chapter.

---

depict and therefore classify his contemporary deity.
[87]Parton, *Larionov*, p. 112.

Chapter IV
Goncharova's Peasants and the Call for the Regeneration of Contemporary Society, 1907–11

4.1 Introduction

Between 1907 and 1911 Goncharova executed a series of paintings devoted to labouring peasants that focus primarily on the seasonal cycle of the agrarian year. These scenes from the daily life of the peasantry are represented in monumental terms reminiscent of icon painting. Indeed, Marina Tsvetaeva related Goncharova's peasant series of paintings to icons when she described them as "…the seasons in labour, the seasons in joy: harvest, ploughing, sowing, the apple-picking, wood-gathering, reaping, old women with rakes, planting potatoes, peddlers and peasant-farmers all interspersed with images from icons."[1]

In addition to this emphasis on labour, a common feature shared by these paintings is the focus on women as their primary subject matter, which may be a reflection of out-migration. Industrialzation caused male peasants to seek paid jobs in the cities. This resulted in long periods of male absence in a number of rural communities, which in turn forced the females to assume responsibility for all of the agricultural and household duties. During this climate of change, rural peasant women came to be seen both as loyal citizens who provided the continuity of traditional customs and ways of life and as the maintainers of the moral fibre of the community. Thus the female presence was instrumental in maintaining

[1]Marina Tsvetaeva, "Natalia Goncharova. Zhizn i tvorchestvo," *Prometei*, 7, 1969, pp. 178–79.

traditional rural existence, and Goncharova seems to have highlighted this sentiment in these canvases.

4.2 Rural life

By the close of the nineteenth century there existed a collective fear that the traditional ways of peasant life were being eroded primarily due to changes resulting from industrialization, migration to urban areas and the rising rate of literacy. Because rural women were known to "cling to the family and the land," they provided their native areas with stability during these changing times.[2]

A significant factor that contributed to the higher rate of out-migration among village men than women was the fear for the loss of female chastity, and in many instances women who left the protected life of the village were ascribed a tarnished reputation. Male migrants were generally seen as more attractive marriage partners to rural women, but conversely female migrants were considered of dubious virtue and therefore less desirable to rural men.[3] Additionally, marriage to a rural woman was seen as ensuring that migrant men would be more likely to return to the village and send much needed cash home. One contemporary

---

[2]D.N. Zhbankov, "Otkhozhie promysly v Smolenskoi gubernii, *Smolenskii vestnik*," 81, 11 July 1893, p. 2. See Engel, "Russian Peasant Views of City Life," *Slavic Review*, 52, 1993, p. 446.

[3]Engel, "Russian Peasant Views of City Life," p. 449; Robert Eugene Johnson, *Peasant and Proletarian: The Working Class of Moscow in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Leicester, 1979), p. 75; and Christine Worobec, *Peasant Russia: Family and Community in the Post-Emancipation Period* (Princeton, 1991), p. 145.

scholar summed up the situation accordingly, "it isn't the land that attaches a man to the village, it's the family."[4]

Such attitudes help explain the correlation between male out-migration and early marriages. In pre-Revolutionary Russia areas with the highest number of male migrants were the same areas that had the highest number of early marriages: in some instances girls were married to migrant men before puberty. Goncharova's native province of Tula had one of the earliest marriage rates in the Central Agricultural Region, as well as one of the highest number of male out-migrants.[5] Goncharova would have been aware of the changes that this rural-urban nexus brought to her childhood home.

Fewer women were granted permission to seek paid employment in the cities. Under the existing system, the decision to grant a passport for a woman's travel was left to her closest male relative, which in most cases was her husband, father or a village elder.[6] This naturally limited the options of a woman who wanted to migrate to an urban centre or who was unhappy with village life. As one man explained in 1913:

> My mother is an old woman and I have two children. I endure extreme need and am in no position to pay someone to work for me and besides, where would I find someone? In the first place, in the house I need someone to spin and weave, to sew and do the wash. And in the second place,

---

[4]S.N. Prokopovich, *Biudzhety peterburgskikh rabochikh* (St. Petersburg, 1909), p. 37. See Engel, "The Woman's Side: Male Out-Migration and the Family Economy in Kostroma Province," *Slavic Review*, 45, 1986, p. 257.
[5]Engel, *Between the Fields and the City: Women, Work and Family in Imperial Russia, 1861–1914* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 11. See also Worobec, *Peasant Russia*, p. 125.
[6]Engel, "Russian Peasant Views of City Life," p. 451.

> [during the] summers I need someone to work in the fields, to gather hay and the like.[7]

The bulk of Russian out-migrants were not seasonal but full-time workers as their employers sometimes implemented measures specifically to discourage them from leaving the cities.[8] As a result, although peasant women held no legal rights to the land, they assumed responsibility for its upkeep until the men returned to their villages to resume permanent control, which did not usually occur until they were approximately 40 years of age.[9]

Many men did not visit their native communities for years on end. One popular folk song describes the lonely position of newly married women whose husbands had left the village, "neither a maiden nor a widow, a real orphan."[10] Rural wives often succumbed to loneliness, and, if they proved their loyalty to the village through hard work and dedication to the survival of the community as a whole, the village willingly forgave adulterous affairs and illegitimate children.[11] The husband who had neglected his responsibilities towards his wife and his community was seen as the culprit.

Not only were they responsible for the chores traditionally allocated to women, but now rural women were also expected to bear the

---

[7]*Tsentralnyi Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv* (TsGIA), op. 154, I stol, IV otd., d. 345; op. 197, I stol, IV otd., d. 301, 2–3. See also op. 189, I stol, IV otd. 4056, 13; op. 199, II stol, IV otd., d. 58, 2–3. See Engel, "Peasant Views of Russian City Life," p. 454.
[8]For example, by 1900 only nine per cent of Russian factory workers, as compared with over 18 per cent in 1883, were employed on a seasonal basis. Johnson, *Peasant and Proletarian*, pp. 35–36.
[9]Ibid., pp. 41–42, 43 and 50.
[10]Tenishev Archive, delo 589 (Galich), p. 119. D.N. Zhbankov, *Babia storona* (Kostroma, 1891), p. 134. See Engel, "Male Out-Migration," p. 262.
[11]Engel, "Male Out-Migration," p. 262.

burden of the responsibilities of their absent husbands or brothers. The sole role of the male out-migrant was to provide cash for his family. When these men visited their villages, they were frequently treated like guests and therefore not expected to help in the fields or with household chores.[12] These duties now remained continuously in the charge of the female domain. This increased burden placed upon rural women often took a physical toll, as evidenced by reports that the most physically demanding seasons often disrupted their natural menstrual cycles.[13]

The absence of male family members, however, was not without advantages. In addition to providing women with a means of birth control (through either abstinence or a disrupted cycle), it gave them a measure of control over their own lives and household decisions.[14]

As the peasantry were seen as representative of the heart and soul of Russia, it was thought that this erosion of their native customs would result in the cessation of the purity and innocence that educated groups romantically associated with these rural labourers. Goncharova, herself an educated outsider to this way of life, spent the first 11 years of her life at her grandparent's estate, *Ladyzhino* at *Polotianyi zavod*, where she had direct contact with rural labourers, as well as their customs and the conditions they faced. Here she became familiar with traditional Russian tales and songs, and she and her brother were entertained with peasant lore by their nanny as well as by the family helper Dmitri, an ex-soldier and

---

[12]*Materialy dlia statistiki Kostromskoi oblast*, vyp. 3 (Kostroma, 1872), pp. 103–04. See Engel, "Male Out-Migration," p. 262.
[13]Engel, "Male Out-Migration," p. 264.
[14]Ibid., p. 266.

caretaker of the Goncharov property.[15] This instilled in the artist a nostalgic view of the peasantry and their enduring traditions. By all accounts this experience affected the young Goncharova, and even after her emigration to the West she never lost her romantic notion of the peasantry and her love of the Russian countryside.[16]

The majority of migrants to Moscow came from neighbouring provinces, including Goncharova's native Tula.[17] Tula was in fact greatly affected by male out-migration.[18] The high population density and food shortages caused a large number of men to seek work in the urban centres.[19] Given her attachment to the countryside of her native province and her fond memories of her childhood in *Polotianyi zavod*, Goncharova would have been sensitive to the threat to traditional rural ways during this period of widespread change.

Goncharova in her peasant cycle focused mainly upon labouring women who provided stability to rural life, a life that she reminisced about fondly. This is at odds with a number of traditional *lubok* representations of peasant women, who do not always fare well in didactic *lubki* focusing on marriage and secular morality. In works such as *A Lesson for Husbands, Poor Peasant Countrymen and Extravagant Wives*, 1874, a peasant woman persuades her hardworking husband to sell his livestock so

---

[15]Chamot, *Goncharova Stage Designs and Paintings*, p. 6.
[16]Tsvetaeva, "Natalia Goncharova," *passim*.
[17]Johnson, *Peasant and Proletarian*, p. 31.
[18]Tula was second only to the Moscow province in the number of migrants sent, and it is likely that the closer proximity of Moscow played a major role in this. Joseph Bradley, *Muzhik and Muscovite: Urbanisation in Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 105–06, 126, 128 and 168.
[19]Overpopulation and food shortages in Tula also caused a high rate of infant mortality. Ibid., pp. 11, 12 and 22.

that she can buy new clothes (Fig. 105). She is then seen enjoying her finery. But, come winter her husband decides that she must pull the sleigh in place of his horse, which he sold to pay for the clothes. At the bottom right of the print a merchant and an officer are depicted explaining the moral of this print to their wives. Similarly, in *A Peasant Was Ploughing the Field...*, 1876, a male peasant is shown ploughing at sunset. His wife, however, neglects her duties as she does not bring his lunch to him as do the other peasants' wives. Because of this he decides to beat her upon his return home that evening.

Another popular *lubok* theme is the juxtaposition of the lazy peasant to his industrious counterpart. *The Peasant* [*Muzhichek*], 1849, is one such example where the lazy peasant is seen sitting on a bench, sleeping on the stove or idly staring out the window while in the background his horses run free and his crops are left to rot (Fig. 106). He is juxtaposed to his industrious counterpart who is shown taking his harvested crops to market. The hard-working peasant is then seen celebrating and enjoying the fruits of his labour. Goncharova's peasants, unlike those in *lubki*, are not lazy, but hard-working women who maintain traditional customs, ways of life and the moral fibre of the community. They, therefore, contradict the negative representations of peasant women often found in this traditional genre.

4.3 Pictorial analysis

Although Goncharova primarily concerned herself with depicting labouring peasants in this cycle, some also show peasant festivities, such as the round dance, where Goncharova's predominant choice of females adheres to this folk ritual (Fig. 107). However, women are also the main protagonists in the majority of paintings in this series, which suggests that the men have left for employment in the city. Hence these paintings capture the changing world of rural Russia.

In the *Round Dance* Goncharova presented the women in all their dignity as they perform their dance and, in fact, the work is imbued with a sense of solemnity. The lush greens used by Goncharova to denote the trees and other vegetation would suggest the fertility of the land which these women are able to maintain in spite of the absence of men. Therefore this painting could be read as Goncharova's portrayal of the peasant women as providers of stability and keepers of this traditional way of life.

The works in the peasant series, including this one, highlight the strength of women, not in the more romantic manner of nineteenth-century artists such as Alexei Venetsianov but in a way that presents both the masculine and the feminine sides of these figures, through physical labour, here indicated by the lush environment these women created, and nurturing respectively (Fig. 108). This aspect of the series can be correlated to the male and female aspects of Goncharova's character, as indicated by her

critics.[20] As Tugendkhold states in his review of Goncharova's 1913 exhibition in Moscow:

> How strange it is that this is a masculine rather than a feminine personality. It is true, I just said that as a women she absorbs external influences but this does not contradict the principal feature of her talent – masculine, sharp and vigorous expressiveness. Here I will be permitted to make a proviso. By how much did the female principle collectively become apparent in the history of art when the basic principle was always organized and synthetic; pattern, traced rhythm arose from women. But in our individualistic age when only by means of strict selection a little feminine talent escapes, female artists are like men. This applies particularly to Russian women artists: the spirit of the creative work of Polenova and Golubkina is not theatrical scenery but the search for truth. Of course, N. Goncharova is a gifted scene-painter and in her *Four Apostles with Scrolls* (the best work in the exhibition), in *The Crowned Mother of God*, in *Grape-Gathering*, in *Reaping* there is more rhythmical flair and ornamentalism. But it is not the main thing; it is only the external framework. But Goncharova's chief, organic quality, as I have already said, is her acute, satirical expressiveness. As a matter of fact, her analytical ability predominates in her over the gift of synthesis, her masculine eye over her feminine lyricism. … Such talent of Goncharova is receptive in a feminine way, expressive in a masculine way, bold in a Russian way….[21]

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there was an increase in the number of pre-mortem household fissures among peasants, and disputes between women were most commonly cited as the reason for these separations.[22] Vasilii Maksimov's *Family Division*, 1876, is in keeping with this stereotype (Fig. 109). As indicated by the title, this painting illustrates a pre-mortem division of family assets (land, livestock,

---

[20]See Sharp, *Primitivism*, pp. 333–370 for a discussion of this duality.
[21]Tugendkhold, "Vystavka Kartin Natalii Goncharovoi (Pismo iz Moskvy)," *Apollon*, 8, 1913, pp. 72–73, trans. by D. Riley.
[22]Worobec, *Peasant Russia*, pp. 80 and 82.

farming equipment, etc.) between the patriarch and his heir. This scene, however, focuses upon the old woman confronting a younger one, presumably her daughter-in-law. The men of the household do little more than watch the bitter dispute, which implies that disharmony among women is the primary source of family friction. In Goncharova's peasant series, however, there is no reference to any form of female discord. Instead, the artist highlighted the opposite, as her women share an affinity with each other, as in *The Round Dance*. Goncharova's approach is also exemplified by works such as *The Fruit Harvest*, 1909, where she presented the viewer with a group of women working in harmony (Fig. 110). Here they fill their baskets with the fruit they have picked and are united by their labour. In some instances Goncharova also unites them in their gaze.

The Fruit Harvest is one of four canvases that depict women picking, carrying and gathering fruit during the harvest. Of these, three centre upon pairs of women working together (Figs 111–112). The remaining painting has as its focus a young maiden picking fruit with a dog as her companion (Fig. 113). She appears to be the only woman in this series whose unmarried status is indicated.[23] This may reflect the notion that a successful harvest correlated to an increase in weddings. In rural towns, the pressure to ensure a fruitful return, and therefore marriage, was heightened with each man that out-migrated.

[23]Peasant girls and unmarried women wore braids.

Stylistically the simplicity and stylization of these canvases can be related to Polenova who also looked to native themes. Both artists were committed to primitive aesthetics and sought to bring Russian folk traditions to a wider audience. Works such as *The Wild Beast (The Serpent)*, 1895–98, demonstrate that both Goncharova and Polenova use bold compositions and bright colours to illustrate the verdant Russian countryside and idealized peasantry (Fig. 3). Furthermore, the subjects in both Polenova's painting and Goncharova's *The Fruit Harvest*, 1909, feature similar subjects: the peasant maiden picking fruit off the trees (Fig. 113).

Goncharova's canvases also display similarities to three of Gauguin's late Tahitian works: *Gathering Fruit* [*Ruperupe*], 1899, *Man Picking Fruit from a Tree*, 1897, and *The Month of Mary* or *Woman Carrying Flowers* [*Te Avae No Maria*], 1899, all of which were located in the Shchukin collection (Figs 114–116). Not only are Goncharova's subjects similar to Gauguin's, but so are the yellow golds used on the backgrounds, and the greens, ochres and oranges of the foliage, figures and draperies.

Goncharova, like Gauguin, may have included fruit to symbolize fecundity. In Gauguin's *The Month of Mary* the golden scene, the fruit and the lush background are all used to allude to fertility (Fig. 116). Also, in Catholic thought the most fertile season in nature, Spring, coincides with the month of the Virgin Mary. Goncharova, in *The Fruit Harvest*,

although excluding religious connotations, also speaks of the abundance of the earth.

In his Tahitian works Gauguin remained distant from the subjects of his paintings. The Frenchman's images of the Tahitian noble savages are similar to the post-emancipation Russian "accounts of village society that often read like reports of Victorian anthropologists encountering new and 'savage' cultures for the first time."[24] Goncharova, however, was not as removed from the peasants in her paintings. Zdanevich states that Goncharova's peasant series arose from her interest in and contact with the local inhabitants of *Polotianyi zavod*:

> She was enticed by the surrounding life, the fieldwork of peasants, their existence [and their] dark and austere clothing. She became acquainted with some of them, talked to them for a long time, and thanks to these conditions her peasant cycle of paintings emerged.[25]

This contact with the peasants is confirmed by Chamot.[26] It is therefore likely that these canvases originated as life-sketches of peasants working and socializing that the artist made during her visits to *Poltianyi zavod.*

Goncharova's peasant paintings can be read as rural icons, highlighting the spiritual strength of rural women. Her contemporary Kazimir Malevich considered icons to be a form of high art that correlated to peasant art and embodied "the entire Russian people with all their

---

[24]Frank, "'Simple Folk, Savage Customs?' Youth, Sociability and the Dynamics of Culture in Rural Russia, 1856–1914," *Journal of Social History*, 25, 1992, p. 711.
[25]Eganburi, *Natalia Goncharova Mikhail Larionov*, p. 15; and Nathalie Corday-Kodrianskaia, "Dernière Rencontre," in *Gontcharova et Larionov. cinquante ans à saint germain-des-prés*, ed. by T. Loguine (Paris, 1971), p. 206, trans. by S. Hippisley-Gatherum.
[26]Chamot, *Goncharova Stage Designs and Paintings*, pp. 6 and 9.

emotions."[27] Goncharova concurred with Malevich. Like Polenova before her, she eliminated all notion of separation between peasant and high art. She portrayed peasants in the monumental terms of icon painting, placing figures on an equal level with the venerated saints of the Russian Orthodoxy. Just as the Orthodox Church considers the icon to be "...the expression of Orthodoxy in its totality," and, as such, on par with the oral and written traditions, Goncharova's peasant icons can be seen as the representation of Mother Russia in her totality.[28] Moreover, the idea of the icon as an indication of "the glory of an age to come" can also be found in the idyllic notion of an earthly paradise depicted in these works.[29]

The lush vegetation and the decorative nature of the peasants' clothing indicate that Goncharova idealized the countryside as a luscious and fruitful place. Perhaps the richness of these canvases was also meant to suggest the spiritual wealth of the peasantry, as well as an idyllic era threatened by the changes in peasant life. Possibly Goncharova was calling for the rediscovery of the communion with and harmony of the Russian countryside.[30]

Goncharova painted her rural icons with the same visual vocabulary that she used to depict her religious images. When viewing

---

[27]Malevich, "Detstvo i iunost Kazimira Malevicha (Glavy iz avtobiografii khudozhnika)," *K istorii russkogo avangarda*, ed. by N. Khardzhiev, (Stockholm, 1976), p. 117; and Kazimir Malevich, "Chapters from an Artist's Autobiography," trans. by A. Upchurch, *October*, 34, 1985, p. 38.

[28]Leonid Ouspensky, *The Theology of the Icon*, trans. by A. Gythiel, vol. 1 (Crestwood, NY, 1992), p. 9.

[29]Ibid., p. 33.

[30]Other works by Goncharova that depict peasants through an icon language include *Haycutting*, 1910. Here Goncharova employed heiratic scale and presented the narrative in a linear manner at the forefront of the picture, devices found in icon examples such as

works such as *The Evangelist* panels, 1910–11, it becomes apparent that Goncharova presented both themes directly, using bold planes of saturated colour and figures represented in solid, sculptural form (Figs 120a–120d). Both Goncharova's peasants and her holy figures are seen predominantly barefoot, which indicates the holy nature of the scenes, and in the case of the peasants, affinity to nature. Their large hands, linear drapery and the stylized representation of facial features are also common to icon painting.[31]

Depictions of women working the land held strong associations with pagan belief in Russia, and in fact females were more closely associated with the earth, pagan rites and magic than males.[32] It is likely that such images would have been linked with *Mokosh*, the ancient goddess of fertility, childbirth and the animal world, as well as the protector of women. The cult of *Mokosh*, or Mother Moist Earth, focused upon the communal life of the village and the welfare of the family.[33] Accordingly the emphasis was not placed on the individual but on the interest of the community as a whole. Mother Earth was considered the

---

The Old Testament Trinity, first half of the sixteenth century (Figs 117–118). In a second version of *Haymaking*, 1910, similar features are present (Fig. 119).

[31]Goncharova's representation of religious figures in the same Neo-primitive manner in which she depicted peasants and other social outcasts such as Jews was perceived as scandalous by the more conservative members of Russian society, which often included critics and censors. Indeed, in March 1912 Goncharova's religious canvases were removed from the Donkey's Tail exhibition. Two years later, in March 1914, 12 paintings on religious themes, including her four *Evangelist* panels, were seized at her one-woman show at Dobychina's Art Bureau in St. Petersburg. See W, "Futurizm i koshchunstvo," *Peterburgskii listok*, 73, 16 March 1914. It was the stylistic treatment of these works that was considered blasphemous, although in the 1912 exhibition this offence was accentuated by the fact that the canvases were hung at an exhibition entitled the Donkey's Tail. The title of the exhibition was given by Larionov as the reason for the removal of these works. V. Parkin, "Oslinyi khvost i mishen," pp. 58–60.

[32]Julia Vytkovskaia, "Slav Mythology," *Feminist Companion to Mythology*, ed. by C. Larrington, trans. by C. Kelly (London, 1992), p. 105.

basis of the social community.[34] These attributes came to be associated with rural women, the providers of stability in the countryside and the guardians of the traditional way of life, who were in turn seen as the earthly representatives of *Mokosh*.

Mokosh is the only ancient deity whose name survives from old Kievien times into twentieth-century Russian folklore. Although she was transformed into the Christian St. Paraskeva, the patron of spinning, health, marriage and fertility, it was her pagan identity as Mother Moist Earth that remained popular with the peasants. *Mokosh* was linked to the *Kamenye baba*, and, because of her and Larionov's interest in indigenous stone *baby*, it is likely that Goncharova would have been cognizant of such a connection.[35]

Goncharova's family owned a linen factory on their estate (*Polotianyi zavod*, the name of her hometown, translates to linen factory). It is likely that this heritage in conjunction with the tales and traditions passed to her during childhood would have provided Goncharova with knowledge of the lore relating to the goddess *Mokosh*, who spun flax and sheared sheep. It is possible that this familiarity with the deity may have contributed to Goncharova's selection of subject matter, as *Mokosh* is associated with fishing, harvest, flax and linen, all of which feature prominently in this series.

---

[33]Hubbs, *Mother Russia*, p. 60.
[34]Ibid., pp. 56–7.
[35]Ibid., p. 20.

Mokosh was believed to come out nocturnally to shear sheep and spin and plait flax.[36] In *Sheep Shearing*, 1907, the two women at the front of the picture are seen shearing sheep (Fig. 121). Behind them a boy restrains a third animal while the woman next to him cradles a small lamb in her arms. This last figure stares out, to draw the viewer's attention to her. A fourth female figure is seen in the distance pulling a child in a pram or a wagon. The scene presents the women as the nurturers of both children and animals.

The dark sky, represented in a deep blue hue, suggests these women are shearing the sheep before sunrise, which not only indicates their arduous life but may also allude to the nocturnal behaviour of *Mokosh*. The protective role of Mother Moist Earth is denoted by the woman who cradles and protects the young lamb.

In this painting, as in Goncharova's *The Fruit Harvest*, 1909, *Haycutting*, 1910, and *Peasants Picking Apples*, 1911, the hands of the figure are either emphasized or enlarged. This is a traditional element in the depiction of *Mokosh*.[37] Many times she is depicted with large hands raised in the air. In the peasant series Goncharova provided a contemporary representation not only of continuing pagan rituals, but also of the traditional lifestyle that had existed from ancient times and was now threatened by industrialization. In *Peasants Picking Apples*, 1911, the focus is upon two heavy, sculptural males harvesting apples (Fig. 122). Here the solid forms are grounded in ancient stone sculpture, possibly

[36]Ibid.

sculpture to recall an earlier period unaffected by out-migration when peasant men remained in the countryside. Therefore, the work can be seen as a nostalgic depiction of a lifestyle threatened, if not lost. As in the case of the paintings of female peasants harvesting, it can also be read as a call for a return to this noble way of life.

The social content in this work is revealed by Malevich who in this period was also creating peasant images like the *Woman with Buckets and a Child*, 1910–11 (Fig. 123). Malevich later referred to Goncharova in his unpublished biography:

> Goncharova and I worked more on the peasant level. Every work of ours had a content that, although expressed in primitive form, revealed a social concern. This was the basic difference between us and The Knave of Diamonds group, which was working in the line of Cézanne.[38]

In her peasant series, Goncharova highlighted the rhythm of rural life, the daily repetition of unending work in a monumental scale, as in *Planting Potatoes*, 1909 (Fig. 124). In this painting Goncharova presented the viewer with a group of six women at the front of the picture labouring in a stylized landscape. A lone male assists a seventh woman in the background.

Unlike Venetsianov, who in *Harvesting: Summer*, before 1827, relegates the labouring peasants deep in the background, Goncharova

---

[37]Pyotr Simonov, *Essential Russian Mythology* (London, 1997), p. 16.

[38]From Malevich's unpublished biography. Cited in Gray, *The Russian Experiment*, pp. 134–35. Portions of this autobiography have been published in English and Russian: Malevich, "Detstvo i iunost Kazimira Malevicha," pp. 103–23; and Malevich, "Chapters from and Artist's Autobiography," pp. 25–44. The passage quoted in Gray is not, however, included in these translations. Sharp states that this fragment is included in Khardizhiev, "Maikovskii i zhivopis," *Maiakovskii: Materialy i issledovaniia* (Moscow, 1940), p. 335. Sharp, *Primitivism*, p. 193 n116.

places them in the foreground as the main subject (Fig. 19).[39] In Venestianov's canvas a young girl breastfeeds her child as reference to the female peasant as mother and nurturer. This is in keeping with the well-established convention of the rural peasant as both close to nature and a symbol of natural life.[40] Venetsianov's work is similar to Jean-François Millet's *The Gleaners*, 1857, which also illustrates the peasants in the countryside in a romantic and idealized manner (Fig. 125).

Goncharova, however, forged her own path in this genre of painting. Indeed, in 1913 Tugendkhold pointed out the distinctive nature of Goncharova's peasant series when he stated that "...this is not the countryside of Venetsianov and Koltsov, but of Sasha Chernyi."[41] Instead, the critic maintained, these are satirical works with a rhythm that is "clumsy and unwieldy."

Venetsianov was considered to be a master of this genre, and his work received a great deal of attention at this time through publications and no less than six temporary exhibitions between 1905 and 1914, as well as a permanent display of paintings at the Museum of Aleksandr III in St.

---

[39]It is likely that Goncharova was aware of this work, which had been located in the Tretiakov Gallery from 1871 and was also referred to or illustrated in four publications between 1901 and 1909: Benois, *Istoriia zhivopisi v XIX v Russkaia zhivopis*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1901), p. 38; *Zolotoe runo*, 7–9, 1907, plate [n.p.]; and Grabar, *Istoriia Russkogo iskusstvo*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1909), p. 70.

[40]See Ludmilla Jordanova, *Sexual Visions: Images of Science and Gender in Science and Medicine Between the Eighteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London, 1989), pp. 19–23.

[41]Tugendkhold, "Vystavka kartin Natalii Goncharovoi," p. 72. Sasha Chernyi (literally Black Sasha) was the pseudonym of the poet and satarist Aleksandr Glikberg, who, following the 1905 Revolution, became one of the most active political satirists working in St. Petersburg. For a list of his principal publications see Sharp, *Primitivism*, p. 305 n134.

Petersburg.[42] Tugendkhold's critique of Goncharova's peasant series constitutes not only an attack on the anti-academicism of her works, but also an endorsement of the established means of representing the genre of rural life.

By focusing on what he perceived to be the satirical nature of Goncharova's peasant series, Tugendkhold overlooked the highly sentimental character of these paintings. By all accounts Goncharova maintained personality traits that she equated with peasants, which she had perhaps developed during her childhood on the family estate. Alexandra Pregel described these qualities:

> Her refined taste and deep faith, her exalted interest in all matters artistic and her total disregard for life's comforts – all of these and her peasant-like sensibilities combined to form her nature.[43]

Paintings such as *Spring Gardening*, 1908–09, demonstrate Goncharova's nostalgia for peasants and the rural way of life (Fig. 126). Before her death Goncharova told Chamot that, "…she never wanted to sell this picture, as it recalled the happiest time of her life."[44] Goncharova was intrigued by the countryside, and this fascination was one of the reasons that she renounced sculpture in favour of painting:

---

[42]A sampling of publications include: "Khronika, Venetsianov v chastnykh sobraniiakh," *Apollon*, 5, 1911, 43–46; and Baron N.N. Vrangel, "Aleksei Gavrilovich Venetsianov v chastnykh sobraniiakh," *Venetsianov v chastnykh sobraniiakh* (Moscow, 1911). The six exhibitions include: Exhibition of Russian Portraiture, St. Petersburg, 1905; Exposition de l'art Russe, Paris, 1906; Exhibition organized by *Starye Gody*, St. Petersburg, 1908; Exhibition of Venetsainov's Painting, The Russian Museum, St. Petersburg, 1911; Venetsianov's Paintings from Private Collections, St. Petersburg, 1911; and Russian Painting and Drawing from the Delarov Collection, St. Petersburg, 1914.
[43]Pregel, "Le Fil D'or," in *Gontcharova et Larionov. cinquante ans à saint germain-des-prés*, ed. by T. Loguine (Paris, 1971), p. 225, trans. by S. Hippisley-Gatherum.
[44]Chamot, *Goncharova Stage Designs and Paintings*, p. 33.

> Sculpture cannot convey the emotion produced by a landscape, the moving fragility of flowers, the softness of a sky in spring. I renounced it because I was fascinated by the play of light, the harmonies of colour.[45]

In this sentimental canvas Goncharova conveyed her emotion through the use of bright light and soft colour harmonies, which enhance the beauty of both peasant women and rural life. The flowering vines are prominent and there is a sense of fecundity in the overall scene. The white flowers in Goncharova's work, traditionally read as a sign of purity, can be seen as symbolizing the innocence and purity of rural life.

In her peasant series Goncharova also painted images that focused upon women engaged in more menial tasks such as washing and drying linen. In *Washing Linen*, 1910, two women and a dog stand at the front of the canvas, one facing and one with her back towards the viewer (Fig. 127). In the background one woman stands in a stream, bent at the waist and washing linen, while another, again with her back to the audience, stands watching her work. The central figure on the right of the canvas holds a brush in her right hand and carries a bundle under her right arm while her companion carries a bundle on her shoulders. Strips of linen lie drying in the foreground on the rich green grass.

Here Goncharova again used linen as a means of alluding to Mother Moist Earth and her associations with flax and linen. Hilton points out that:

> …the [peasants'] tendency to personify nature in seasonal rituals helps to explain the importance of traditional materials and forms in art. … flax… [was] especially

[45]Ibid., p. 8.

> important and endowed with personal and ritual meaning… Flax was the universal material of the textile arts, the focus of all the skills and processes used to make fabric for daily wear and embroidered garments and towels used in seasonal and life-stage rituals. … In weaving and embroidering ceremonial textiles… peasant artists sought to make the decoration worthy of its significance on the essential activities, social customs and rituals that had marked the life of the community for generations.[46]

The task of washing is important in this cycle of linen production.

The counterpart to this painting is *Drying Linen*, 1911, which depicts two older women hanging their wash on a clothesline and another carrying laundry in a basket on her head (Fig. 128). The scene appears to be situated in an urban setting, indicated by the lack of vegetation and several dwellings in the background in close proximity to one another. Unlike the peasants in Goncharova's rural settings these women wear shoes, which could symbolize that they are less in touch with nature than their rural counterparts. They are probably women who have out-migrated and, as a result, have been uprooted from an idyllic way of life.

An additional theme in the peasant series that can be related to *Mokosh* is that of fishing. Since fishing is a form of harvesting that feeds the rural community, *Mokosh* as goddess of fertility is sometimes depicted standing, with arms raised and surrounded by fish. Between 1907 and 1909 Goncharova executed at least four works on this theme. *Fishing*, 1907, is a post-impressionist painting depicting three figures on a boat fishing with nets in a river. Barnyard animals and rural dwellings are dotted along the shore in the background (Fig. 129).

---

[46]Hilton, *Russian Folk Art*, p. 153.

A second painting entitled *Fishing* indicates that by 1909 Goncharova was clearly working in a developed Neo-primitivist style, most noticeable in her treatment of trees, which are now stylized planes of flat colour (Fig. 130). This painting marks a more colourful depiction of this theme in which six figures in the foreground are busy gathering fish from nets while three or four figures walk along the opposite shore in the background.

Goncharova used bold Neo-primitivist style to delineate the canvases *The Pond*, 1909, and *Fishers (Pond)*, 1909 (Figs 131–132). Indeed, when describing *The Pond*, the critic B. Shuiskii discussed the relationship between the artist's technique and the viewer's perception:

> In order to paint such a work it is necessary to attentively and lovingly observe the forms of primitive folk art for a long time. I don't mean to say that this painting pleases the eye, but then it is not intended for a salon. But if you look at it intently you get a sense of a genuine primitive. This is not a copy, not simply an imitation nor a periphrasis of a *lubok*. It is painted by a person capable of entering into the spirit of the ancient, possessing the primitive point of view. The angled lines and colours are similar to those in other works by Goncharova. But the harmony of these tones, given meaning, expresses the light and warmth of summer. The figures are full of movement and when you cease to follow the crooked legs you really feel 'how' they take in the sweep net. A few figures, the patch of rough water, the tree framing it – all this has been squeezed, as if deliberately into the close frames and the painting seems inspired by its rich content.[47]

Goncharova's approach to this theme differs from more traditional representations such as Grigori Soroka's *Fishermen: View of Lake*

[47]Shuiskii, "Oslinyi khvost i Soyuz molodezhi," *Stolichnaia molva*, 12 March 1912, p. 4. See Howard, *The Union of Youth*, pp. 112–13.

Moldino, 1843–44, a contemplative work in which a young male figure is depicted fishing on a river bank as a second male passes in a boat (Fig. 133). With his back to the viewer the fisher is anonymous, as is the boatman. The only identifying attributes are their clothing, which clearly indicate that they are of rural origin. The low horizon line ensures that the harmonious scene is dominated by an unbroken sky that covers over half of the canvas and the smooth reflective surface of the water. In Soroka's work it is nature that is represented in monumental terms, not the peasants themselves, who are secondary to the mood created by the overall setting. This is in opposition to Goncharova's *Fishing* canvases in which the overall setting is subordinate to the solid figures portrayed. Whereas Soroka romanticized nature and rendered it in a realistic mode, Goncharova utilized a more abstract and primitive style to idealize the camaraderie of rural life in which these peasants work in harmony. This is emphasized through a harmony of tones, which convey the light and warmth of summer, and the movement of the figures. In *Fishing*, 1909, *Pond*, 1909 and *Fishers (Pond)*, 1909, however, they appear to be boys too young to leave the countryside to work in the cities.

The fishing theme in these paintings, like the women harvesters and dancers, are imbued with a sense of dignity and a solemn atmosphere that recall Christian themes like the miraculous draught of fish. In Luke 5:1–11 Christ commands Simon Peter to let down his net for a catch. The net is filled with enough fish to fill two boats. Although this Biblical scene refers to Christ's recruital of Simon Peter, James and John as his

Apostles, which is unrelated to Goncharova's works, this theme of nurturing and abundance is the same in both, as is the physical and spiritual feeding of the community. This is not the first instance in Goncharova's art where she refers to Christian themes. As we have seen in Chapter II, her *Bread Vendor* can be viewed as a physical and spiritual nurturer as she offers bread, a symbol of Christ, to the viewer (Fig. 28). The fish is likewise a symbol of Christ.

4.4 Conclusion

Polenova wrote in a letter dated 1886:

> I want to clarify… the ways in which the Russian landscape has influenced, and has found expression in, the Russian folk and epic poetry. In a word, to express the connection between the soil and the works that grow out of the soil…. As subjects I shall take fairytales and express those inventive, creative forms which enliven and nourish the Russian peasant.[48]

It is this she tried to capture in her illustrations such as *The Wild Beast (The Serpent)*. Here she expressed her personal conception of the spirit of the Russian peasant through stylized ornamentation taken directly from the soil."[49] Like Polenova, Goncharova also expressed the connection between the soil and its fruits and combined this with peasant lore and spirituality.

The works included in the peasant series by Goncharova focus upon the cycles of nature depicted in the allegory of peasant life and ritual.

---

[48]Letter from Polenova, to P. Antipova, October 1886. E. Sakharova, ed., *V.D. Polenov – E.D. Polenova: Khronika semikhudozhnikov* (Moscow, 1964), p. 373.
[49]Letter from Polenova to V. Stasov, October 1894. Sakharova, *Polenov – Polenova*, pp. 505–08.

The figures in these paintings are not identified as individuals but as part of an identifiable group. Goncharova put forth the traditional way of peasant life as a visible antidote to urban society. The paintings call for a return to this simpler noble lifestyle, untouched by the evils of contemporary society.

These works reveal Goncharova's ongoing interest in mysticism and regeneration. *Mokosh* was both mystical and maternal. In times of drought, bad weather or danger Mother Moist Earth was summoned through rituals and prayers to restore seasonable weather, to provide a rich harvest or to eliminate the forces of doom and gloom.[50] Similarly, in her peasant series Goncharova called upon *Mokosh* for her regenerative and healing powers.[51]

These paintings then can be read as promoting a traditional way of life and its mysticism. Just as Imperial portraits advocated the ideals of the autocracy and were meant to be venerated, Goncharova's paintings call Russia to once again embrace the traditional rural lifestyle depicted in the images (Fig. 135).

---

[50]Simonov, *Essential Russian Mythology*, p. 5.

[51]In this respect her peasant cycle of paintings can be read in the same light as her *Mystical Images of War*, 1914, a portfolio of 14 apocalyptic lithographs which she began at the outbreak of World War I (Figs 134a–134d). Here Goncharova combined contemporary motifs, the graphic nature of *lubki* and the spirituality and imagery of icon painting.

Chapter V
Painted Heroes and National Cowards: Larionov's Portrayal of Russian Military Life, 1910–14[1]

5.1 Introduction

Between 1910 and 1911, a period that coincides with Larionov's term of military service, the artist executed a number of works that focus on soldiers and military life. He exhibited the first works from this soldier series at the first Knave of Diamonds show in December 1910.[2] Larionov is unique among his contemporaries because he was one of the few artists to consider this type of military subject matter. Two exceptions are Goncharova, who painted two pictures of Larionov and his platoon commander, and Tatlin, who painted works with a naval theme such as *The Vendor of Sailor's Contracts*, 1910, and *The Sailor*, 1912.

Larionov's paintings from this series can be divided into two categories: paintings that provide a social commentary on the plight of conscripts; and paintings that make political statements against the regime. Both categories of work differ from the more conventional representations of soldiers at the time, which tended to be celebratory. It can be argued that Larionov on the other hand mocked military life. He used traditional sources, such as *lubki*, caricatures, military portraiture and battle scenes,

---

[1]In this thesis the term *soldier series* refers to the works in which soldiers and/or life in the military are the subjects. This includes: *The Soldiers* (two paintings, four versions), 1910 and 1911– post 1913; *Salvo*, 1910; *Head of a Soldier*, 1911; *Soldier on a Horse*, 1911; *Resting Soldier*, 1911; *Resting Soldier* (lithograph), 1912; *Smoking Soldier*, 1910–11; *Soldier in a Wood*, 1910–11; *Near the Camp*, 1910–11; and *Head of a Soldier*, 1912. *Officer's Hairdresser*, 1909, is seen as a precursor to this series, and tavern scenes, street scenes and still lives in which soldiers occasionally figure (e.g. *Soldiers Playing Cards*, *ca.* 1904–06; *Street in a Province*, 1910; *Still Life with Tray and Crawfish*, 1910–12) are not included in this grouping.

that were readily identified and revered by his audience. But he then removed the violence from his subject, maintaining only the immediacy of the popular print and the humour of the caricature. These paintings are deliberately coarse in their strict adherence to the Neo-primitivist formal properties developed and advanced by Larionov and Goncharova.

5.2 Larionov in the army

Following a protest in which he led 50 students against the increasingly conservative culture of the Moscow School, Larionov was expelled from the institution in January 1910. As this was his second expulsion, the Council of the School declared that under no circumstances should he be reinstated. In August 1910 Larionov wrote to the school asking for permission to present his work for the title of artist "...so that I may serve my term in the army as a volunteer [instead of a conscript]."[3] This request was granted, and on 24 September 1910 he was awarded a second-class degree. Not only did this end Larionov's 12-year tenure as student, but it also left him open to conscription, as only a first-class degree would have exempted him from military duty. In order to avoid the longer period of service and arduous conditions that came with conscription, Larionov enlisted.[4]

---

[2]*Soldiers* (cat. 107) and *Salvo* (cat. 118) were shown at the first Knave of Diamonds exhibition in Moscow from December 1910–January 1911.
[3]RGALI, fond 680, op. 2, ed. kh. 1517, l. 32.
[4]As an enlisted man, Larionov was required to serve 11 months plus an additional three per summer for the next three years following this term. As a conscript he would have had to serve three years. Enlisted men were allowed to live away from the barracks and were only required to join the camp after the rigorous morning drills. Livshits, *The One and a Half-Eyed Archer,* p. 102.

The chronology of Larionov's national service has received much scholarly attention. It has been dated as early as 1908 and as late as 1913.[5] Loguine believes it occurred in 1908.[6] As a former student of Goncharova and Larionov's, she probably obtained this date directly from the artist. However, Larionov was at times intentionally vague regarding chronology, and, therefore, Loguine's date may be inaccurate.[7] Isarlov places the term from the autumn of 1909 to the summer of 1910, but his dating on Larionov in general and some of his details are sometimes dubious.[8]

---

[5]For contemporary accounts see Eganburi, *Natalia Goncharova. Mikhail Larionov* and. Isarlov, "M. F. Larionov," pp. 26–30. Also see Loguine, *Gontcharova et Larionov*, p. 19; P. Vergo, "A Note on the Chronology of Larionov's Early Work," *The Burlington Magazine*, CXIV, July 1972, pp. 476–479; *idem*, "Larionov's Early Work" [Letter], *The Burlington Magazine*, CVIX, p. 634; Bowlt, "The Chronology of Larionov's Early Work" [Reply], *The Burlington Magazine*, CVIX, pp. 719–720; L. Hutton, I. Hutton and S. Bodine, "[Reply to Vergo,]" *The Burlington Magazine*, CVIX, p. 720; Vergo, "[Reply to Bowlt and Hutton et al.]," *The Burlington Magazine*, CVIX, p. 720; Pospelov, "M.F. Larionov," *Sovetskoe iskusstvoznanie '79*, 2, 1980, p. 250; Parton, *Larionov*, pp. 32–33; and *Nathalie Gontcharova et Michel Larionov*, p. 230.

[6]Loguine, *Gontcharova et Larionov*, p. 16. Edward Lucie-Smith concurs with Loguine's dating. *Lives of the Great 20th-Century Artists* (London, 1999), p. 110.

[7]In his application for French Nationality (1938) Larionov claimed that his military service ran from 1909–10. Dossier No. 37203x38. "Naturalisation Française concernant Michel Larionoff," Ministère des Affaires Sociales et de la Solidarité Nationale, Paris. Parton points out that in this instance Larionov's dates can be labelled only as approximations; he cites Larionov's entry on the date of his father's death, 1904–05, as another example of these approximations. Parton, *Larionov*, p. 33. It appears that Larionov was not overly concerned with accuracy when completing this form. Larionov was deliberately vague likely due to the fact that he enjoyed keeping his critics, art historians and the press guessing. It is also likely that he did this to propagate the notion that the technical advances found in his series of Neo-primitivist canvases, which were painted during the artist's military service, preceded those of Western artists. It has been suggested that Larionov's supposed mental confusion resulted in part from a serious head injury that he suffered during World War I. Serge Fortensky and Pierre Vorms, "Entretiens avec Serge Fortensky à propos de Michel Larionov," interview, 1960s, Pierre Vorms Archives, France. (Parton, *Larionov*, p. 145.) This, however, does not account for the fact that as early as 1911 Larionov predated his canvases. In the catalogue of his one-man exhibition in Moscow several works, including *The Dough Kneaders* (cat. 49) and *The Provincial Dandy* (cat. 75) are predated. Predating also occurs in Eganburi's monograph of 1913, in which Larionov played a major role.

[8]Isarlov dates the 1906 *Salon d'Automne*, which Larionov helped Diaghilev organize, as 1905 and he misidentifies the *Wreath* exhibition of 1907. Isarlov, "M. F. Larionov," p. 26. The only document supporting Isarolav's claim of 1909–10 is Larionov's application for French citizenship, the problems of which are outlined above.

Eganburi states that Larionov entered the Army in 1910.[9] But like Isarlov, Eganburi's account is not altogether accurate as he himself admitted in a letter to Le-Dantiu:

> I have also written a monograph on Larionov and Goncharova. The monograph is shallow, shallow praises, it'll appear under a pseudonym. Although you can't rely on it particularly, I'll earn at least 50–70 rubles.[10]

Had Larionov enlisted in 1908 his military tenure would have taken place while he was still enrolled at the Moscow School, which is highly unlikely since as a student he would have been exempt from service. Furthermore, although Larionov remained an active member of the circle of avant-garde artists and was a founding member of the Knave of Diamonds during this period, his level of participation in exhibitions seems to have fallen after the autumn of 1910, suggesting that his military obligations limited his participation in these activities.[11] From October 1910 through the following autumn Larionov appears to have participated in a total of only three shows, as opposed to seven exhibitions from January to September 1910.[12] In the winter of 1911, these activities again

---

[9]Eganburi, *Natalia Goncharova Mikhail Larionov*, p. 33.

[10]Letter from I. Zdanevich to M. Le-Dantiu, The State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg fond 135, ed. kh. 5, II, January 1913. See L. Diakonitsyn, *Ideinye protivorechiya v estetike russkoi zhivopisi konsta 19–nachala 20 vv*, Perm, 1966, p. 197.

[11]Although Larionov's exhibition record decreased, he was not so overburdened with army duties to abandon his artistic endeavours (both painting and organizing exhibitions). This is due to the ease of life as a volunteer. Livshits similarly remained active during his term of service as a volunteer. Livshits, *The One and a Half-Eyed Archer,* pp. 97–138.

[12]The first Knave of Diamonds exhibition, December 1910–January 1911, Moscow; The Second Izdebskii Salon, December 1910–January 1911, Odessa; The Union of Youth, Spring 1911, St. Petersburg. At present, the exact date of the 1911 Moscow Salon is unclear and there remains some question as to whether Larionov exhibited works at the 1911 World of Art exhibitions held in St. Petersburg (January) and Moscow (Spring). Gordon lists Goncharova as the sole representative of the pair whereas *Nathalie Gontcharova Michel Larionov* states that there are two versions of the catalogue, one of which lists two of Larionov's canvases: Gordon, pp. 454–57; *Nathalie Gontcharova Michel Larionov*, p. 246.

increased when he participated in three exhibitions, including a one-man show in which he displayed 124 works.[13] This suggests that his army tenure lasted until the autumn of 1911.

This chronology is substantiated by contemporary correspondence. In a letter of 26 October 1910 Kandinsky wrote to Gabrielle Münter from Moscow and described his first meeting with Goncharova:

> Yesterday we (Tomik & I) went to see Goncharova. She was rather cool at first (that's the girl who wrote the rude letter). In the nicest possible way I gave her a piece of my mind (she is very young), which made an impression as she was happy to show a lot of pictures, which I took the liberty of criticizing (very gently). *Very* talented things, with a *lot* of feeling, in a word *very* interesting, though a bit too theoretical on the one hand & not fully worked out on the other.... When we left she shook my hand warmly in student fashion.[14]

Kandinsky's visit occurred on a Tuesday when Larionov would have been on duty at the barracks, and Goncharova asked him to return on Sunday to talk with Larionov.[15] It seems that the two met the day before at Aristarkh home, presumably when Larionov was on leave from his camp.[16]

---

[13]1910: The Golden Fleece, January–February, Moscow; The Union of Russian Artists, February–March, St. Petersburg; The Union of Youth, March–April, St. Petersburg; The Izdebskii Salon, May–July, St. Petersburg and Riga; The Union of Youth, June–August, Riga; Russian Artists – Costumes and Scenic Decoration of the Theatre and the Stage, June–July, Paris. 1911: The World of Art, November, Moscow; The Union of Youth, December January 1912, St. Petersburg; and Mikhail Larionov Solo Exhibition, December, Moscow.

[14]Letter from Kandinsky to Gabriele Münter, 26 October 1910 [Wednesday], Moscow. Kandinsky, *Wassily Kandinsky and Gabriele Münter: Letters and Reminiscences*, trans. by I. Robson (Munich, 1994), p. 73. A more complete version of this letter is published in *Nathalie Gontcharova Michel Larionov*, p. 228.

[15]*Nathalie Gontcharova Michel Larionov*, p. 228. Kandinsky accepted Goncharova's invitation, as indicated by his letter of Saturday 29th October " Tomorrow first church, then lunch with the Hartmanns. Then Goncharova." Kandinsky, *Wassily Kandinsky and Gabriele Münter*, p. 76.

[16]On Saturday 29 October 1910, Kandinsky wrote, " ...Then painters kept dropping in [at Lentulov's]: Konchalovskii (Le Fauconnier's friend) whom I will see again the day after tomorrow at Mashkov's, Goncharova, Lari[o]nov, a few more painters and finally the man himself...." ibid.

Kandinsky specifically referred to Larionov's military service in two letters. On 8 November 1910, he wrote, "Larionov told me about the command in the army & I was quite shattered. I should like to paint that sort of thing...";[17] and on 27 November he recorded, "Went to a street market today. On my own in the end. (Larionov has barrack theatricals. Hartmann has a cold.)..."[18]

A letter Larionov sent to Goncharova during the summer of 1911 confirms that he was then still in the army:

> My dear Talinka! We lead a monotonous enough life here. I came to Petersburg on military grounds – to find cloth for flags.... I went to the Museum of Aleksandr III. A rather gloomy atmosphere reigns over it. The only exceptional thing is the department of icons, but it was impossible to go there, because it was closing. They have already transferred objects of Hindu art in a new museum under way.... In summer, Petersburg looks a lot like Odessa, the same sky, a deep blue, very sombre, almost black. The grey houses, the green leaves of trees.... Volodia Tatlin is not here, he didn't visit his uncle ... Taitsy, our camp is installed on a exposed patch, right in the sun. ... There is no doubt, the environs are very beautiful, but we are not allowed to go there. Take care of yourself, my very dear Talinka.[19]

Larionov's period in the army, then, can be placed from autumn 1910 to autumn 1911 as can the soldier series, dated by many scholars between 1908 and 1909.[20] This is supported by the visual evidence, since

---

[17]Ibid., p. 83.
[18]Ibid., p. 90.
[19]Letter from Larionov to Goncharova, Summer 1911. Private collection, Russia. See *Nathalie Gontcharova Michel Larionov*, p. 230.
[20]This is supported by *The One and a Half-Eyed Archer* where Livshits states, "If my military service had been merely a mild case of the measles which, in most cases it was, beginning with Larionov and ending with Khlebnikov, I would be able to just mention it in passing as an insignificant detail in our biographies – there are quite a few coincidences in time!" Livshits' phrasing of the order in which the affliction of military duties was passed from one member of the avant-garde to another suggests that the burden was transferred from Larionov to Livshits, who began his National service in 1912, to Khlebnikov, who was drafted in 1916. Livshits, *The One and a Half-Eyed*

the soldier paintings are in a more highly developed Neo-primitivist style than Larionov's canvases of 1908–09. For example, Larionov's *Fishes* and *Through the Nets* of 1908 are characterized by light brushwork and harmonious colour relationships. The lyrical brushstrokes lack the coarseness of his later paintings. His palette is lighter, dominated by bright, pure reds, yellows, oranges, greens and peaches, and the objects are modelled by light. In 1909, the artist began to depict figures and objects in more monumental terms (e.g., *Woman Passing By*, *Dancing* and *Still Life with Lobster*). His figures now filled the canvas and he began to use bold contours and colours. Black also infiltrated his palette. By 1910 he began to explore the possibilities of geometric volumes (e.g., *Loaves* and *Portrait of Velimir Khlebnikov*). He simplified his drawing style and boldly delineated the figures and objects in his paintings. His use of colour also changed. He now worked with large planes of colour which, in addition to building form, he employed to intensify the emotional quality of the works. He often used murky, blended colours in order to depict dirty, abject surroundings (e.g. the background of *Soldiers* and *Resting Soldier*).

Further, the choice of soldiers as subjects relates to other themes he depicted in 1910–11. From 1907–08 he had painted bathers, landscapes

---

Archer, pp. 106–07. It is also likely that Larionov used the dates of his military service as a means of pre-dating his soldier series. When Vergo raised the issue of chronology in relation to the dating of Larionov's military service it was taken as an affront those who wished to defend Larionov's integrity posthumously:

> A comment on chronology is sanctioned as the art critic's prerogative, but an attack on the artist's integrity is wholly uncalled for in a period which still leaves many stones unturned even to the most experienced of art historians.

(Leonard Hutton, Ingrid Hutton and Sarah Bodine, p. 720) Vergo's replied by reiterating the importance of Larionov's military service to the chronology of his early

and nature scenes (e.g. *Spring Garden*, *Rain*, *The Garden* and *Acacias in Bloom*), animals (e.g. *The Peacock*, *The Pig* and *Fish*) and still lives (e.g. *Pears* and *Bouquet of Roses*). In 1909 he began to favour more urban themes, street and tavern scenes as well as portrayals of Gypsies and hairdressers. By 1910–11 he had broadened his repertoire of low-life to include prostitutes and circus performers. Larionov's soldiers series can be related to the low-life painting since conscripted men were considered social outcasts.

5.3 Precedents

Larionov enlisted with the First Ekaterinoslav Life Grenadier Regiment of Aleksandr II in Moscow, which was stationed at the Kremlin during the winter and in the city's outskirts during the summer months. Goncharova documented Larionov and his platoon commander in two paintings of *ca.* 1911, which suggests that the two developed a close relationship (Figs 31 and 136).[21] If so, this would have resulted in Larionov's enjoyment of certain perks. The volunteers' assignments were left to the commanding officers who expected gifts and services in exchange for a more comfortable lifestyle with less arduous duties, such as

works and that it "remains open to question whether the mis-dating of Larionov's works is a falsification or not." Vergo, "[Reply to Bowlt and Hutton et al.]," p. 720.

[21]Goncharova executed two portraits of *Larionov and His Platoon Commander* in *ca.* 1911, currently located at The State Russian Museum in St. Petersburg and The Pompidou Centre in Paris (*Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection). Goncharova first exhibited the Pompidou Centre version at the Donkey's Tail in the Spring of 1912, which fits the established chronology of Larionov's military service and the dating of this work to 1911.

office work or tutoring their children.[22] The quality of these increased according to rank. Livshits states, "Once one had got on good terms with the lower authorities (the section commander, the platoon commander, the sergeant-major) a number of burdens seemed to fall by the wayside."[23]

Larionov's privileged position is suggested by his role as "official regiment artist" and his dispatch to St. Petersburg for flag material during which he visited at least one museum. Larionov was also asked to paint a mural depicting the regiment's accomplishments during the Russo-Japanese war.[24]

The conventional subject matter and style of Larionov's mural demonstrates a degree of familiarity with established military representations, which he rejected in his paintings. Traditional depictions of soldiers are generally limited to stately portraits of heroic officers, like Orest Kiprenskii's paintings which attest to the patriotic mood of Russian society during the Napoleonic War. The artist is renowned for his romantic portrayals of military figures such as *E. V. Davydov*, 1809, where the Colonel of the Hussars stands in front of an austere background and is represented in military garb (Fig. 137). Light reflects the figure from the lower left in a theatrical manner. His *contrapposto* pose and idealized features reflect the classicism inherent in this painting. In addition to the obvious implication of strength and authority, the subject's weapon can also be seen as an emblem of patriotism and allegiance to the Tsar.

---

[22]Livshits, *The One and a Half-Eyed Archer,* pp. 102 and 104–06; Bushenll, *Mutiny Amid Repression*, p. 10.
[23]Livshits, *The One and a Half-Eyed Archer,* p. 104.

In many cases these portrayals involve dramatic battle scenes where the heroic officer commands his troops. The Academy held special battle-painting classes for this revered genre. These romanticized themes glorify violence and death, as in Auguste Desarnod's *The Battle of Bordino*, 1810s, depicting General F.P. Uvarov commanding the cavalry corps in a battle during the Napoleonic War (Fig. 138). The central focus is Uvarov who leads a group of mounted soldiers. General V.V. Orlov-Denisov, commander of the Cossack guards, and General A.S. Chalikov, commander of the Uhlan guards, are included in his entourage. The immediate foreground is empty, except for the helmet of a fallen soldier to provide an unobstructed and isolated view of the hero. Beyond the officers are the Russian troops combating the French infantry.

The higher the rank of the military figure in this painting, the more detailed the likeness. General Uvarov and his fellow officers are rendered in full-view, with their gazes directed beyond the canvas. All other figures are represented in profile. Details extend to the officers' uniforms, their individual medals, epaulettes and aiguilettes and their breeches. The common soldiers, by contrast, are anonymous figures in identical costumes. They are obscured by the hazy, smoke-filled background that contrasts with the clarity of the General's immediate surroundings. These men are simply backdrop props that enhance his importance, a far cry from what Larionov presented in his soldier series.

---

[24]Parton received this information from Eugene Mollo via Mary Chamot. Parton, *Larionov*, p. 33.

The romanticized battle scenes are removed from the more gruesome depictions found in *lubki*. The most common sources for representations of military life, these prints highlighted the bravery of the soldiers in their loyal service of the Tsar, also reinforcing class distinction between officers and conscripts.

These images were intended for lower class audiences. Peasants were particularly fond of *lubki*, often a rural community's sole source of information on military conflicts. The two most common themes found in the *lubki* are the hero and the life of the troops. The hero is one of the oldest *lubok* themes and can be divided into two categories: fictional and historical. Fictional characters, such as The Glorious Knight Evdon, The Valiant Knight Venetsian Franzel and Prince Bova, are taken from a number of sources including folk tales and literature. Historical figures on the other hand are most commonly imported from icon painting (e.g., St. George and St. Demetrius of Thessalonica) and military life (e.g., Alexander the Great, Major General Alexander Seslavin and General Alexander Suvorov). The hero is invariably shown on horseback, either slaying his enemy (e.g. *The Battle of Yeruslan Lazarevich with the Dragon Gorynych*, early nineteenth century, Fig. 139) or preparing for battle (e.g. *Count Matvei Ivanovich Platov*, 1851, Fig. 140). In many cases, a number of the elements of the narrative are represented simultaneously.

Lubki depicting military life comprise primarily battle scenes, which are frequently more graphic than their painted counterparts. *The Battle of Liebstadt*, first quarter of the nineteenth century, simultaneously

illustrates various episodes of the battle and includes gunfire, hand-to-hand combat, archery, lancing and bayoneting (Fig. 141). Wounded, dead and decapitated soldiers as well as miscellaneous body parts are scattered throughout the scene. Captions within the image, such as "Snatched from his picket" (bottom centre), explaining the ensnaring and dragging off of a sentry from his post, serve to intensify the drama.

Lubki dating from the period of the Russo-Japanese War still centre around the fearless officer. In *Russia's War with Japan in 1904* [*Voina Rossii c Yaponoi v 1904g*] the commander is surrounded by a vortex of activity, but the viewer is now thrust into the middle of the conflict, with soldiers falling all around (Fig. 142).[25] Smoke fills the air as the Russian flag is carried across the battleground. The scene is further animated by the call of the bugle, which heightens the intensity of the frenetic environment.

The graphic nature of this genre is enhanced by the primitive style of the prints with their linear representations, bold planes of bright colours, heiratic scale and the use of text. Officers and conscripts are treated as they are in battle painting. The text highlights the commendable way the officer led his troops into battle. Major General Alexander Seslavin, for example, was the subject of an equestrian portrait of 1839 included in a portfolio of engravings that hailed 16 generals who served during the War of 1812 (Fig. 143). Seslavin and his stylized horse dominate the image.

[25]The heroic depiction of Russian soldiers in *Russia's War with Japan in 1904* does not indicate the difficulty Russian troops faced in this conflict. Only the text, which describes the "first clash" between Russian troops and a heavily armed Japanese detachment in the north of Korea, alludes to this.

They are pushed to the foreground while his battling troops are ambiguously rendered behind the horse's legs in the bottom half of the page. The area behind the Major General is left empty so as not to distract attention from the valiant hero.

Larionov's vast collection of Russian *lubki* and foreign prints contained at least 170 prints, including representations of Russia's wars with Siberia and Turkey, and the Crimean War. He also held a number of hero and soldier *lubki*, including *General Bebutov* (cat. 187 and 188), *Alexandre Nevskii* (cat. 188), and *General Ermilov* (cat. 211), as well as two versions of the curiously entitled *Soldier's Target* (cat. 288 and 289).[26]

In his soldier series, Larionov deliberately exploited the crude nature of the *lubok* depictions of military heroes and battles to refute the traditional representation of grandeur and might. He did not depict heroic officers, but rather conscripts and ordinary army life. In the instances where the soldier is of a higher rank, Larionov depicted the subject in an unbecoming, non-heroic manner. Elements of satire are incorporated throughout.

Although Eganburi asserted that no other Russian artist had "previously turned his attention" to such representations of military life, two earlier artists, Pavel Fedotov and Leonid Solomatkin, had already

[26]The exhibition Original Icons and Popular Prints, held at the Artistic Salon in Moscow in April 1913, contained the following *lubki* from Larionov's collection: 171 [Russian] *lubki*, 39 Chinese *lubki*, 17 Tatar *lubki*, 10 French *lubki* and nine "Japanese *lubki* for China." *Lubki* from the collections of N.V. Bogoiavlenskii, A.I. Pribylovskii, N.M. Bocharov, N.D. Vinogradov. In fact, the overwhelming majority of the objects included in this show came from Larionov's personal collection. Op. cit.

created satirical soldier images in the nineteenth century.[27] Fellow artist and life-long friend of Larionov, Sergei Romanovich commented upon this in his reminiscences of the artist's soldier series:

> Larionov had come into contact with the life of the soldier and the themes of the soldier's life as far back as Tiraspol, for example in *The Soldier's Little Night Club* [also known as *The Soldier's Tavern*]. Now, involving himself in the emotional experience of this life, he saw it in first-hand proximity and he found in himself the strength, unadorned and unabated, to tell the truth about this life. The truth was at times crude, sometimes sad – many artists would turn away from this truth or try to forget it somewhat more quickly, but a very large number of artists had been in Larionov's position. However, besides Fedotov and possibly Solomatkin, it is not possible to find others who gave their fixed and fully sympathetic attention to the soldier's everyday routine. (Here we are not talking about those artists who painted battle scenes – they encountered other problems.)[28]

In Fedotov's *The Major's Courtship* of 1848 a young merchant's daughter is presented to a much older officer who has asked for her hand in marriage (Fig. 144). Upon seeing her intended the young maiden turns to flee. The major, on the other hand, stands in the doorway preening himself, completely indifferent to the evident distress of his future bride. The cat in the foreground grooms himself in an obvious parody of the narcissistic major. In Fedotov's painting the match-maker and the orthodox priest serve to denote the implication of society and the church in this practice where marriage is reduced to a business transaction. Here the merchant has bought the prestige of an aristocratic pedigree for his family while the impoverished officer gains a much needed dowry.

---

[27]Eganburi, *Natalia Goncharova Mikhail Larionov*, p. 33.
[28]Romanovich, "Vospominaniia o M.F. Larionove," *Podem*, 1988, 6, pp. pp. 129–30.

Solomatkin's *The Carol Singers*, 1872, depicts a group of drunken officers who have appeared at the home of a wealthy merchant to sing carols (Fig. 145).[29] The trio, however, has arrived after 8:00 p.m. and it appears that only an elderly man, perhaps a servant, is there to greet them. He displays no interest in the singers, preferring instead to return to the warmth of the lit room beyond. His back is to the carollers and he seems more concerned with the state of his pipe than with them. The trio is portrayed in an absurd manner, unbefitting their position as heroic defenders, emphasized by the medals adorning their chests.

Fedotov and Solomatkin were both influenced by *lubki*, Russian and Dutch genre painting and satirical prints. Known for their social commentary and their strong portrayal of character types, these artists were considered social outcasts.[30] This probably would have appealed to Larionov and provided inspiration for his soldier series.

Larionov also appears to have explored the potentials of caricature. Typical of previous caricatures were the works of Ivan Terebenev whose satirical depictions of French soldiers during the Napoleonic War were

---

[29]Solomatkin returned to the theme of carol singers throughout his career.

[30]A social satirist, Fedotov was suspected of being a free thinker and subsequently was monitored closely by the censors. In 1848 he and fellow engraver Yevstafy Bernadskii hoped to publish an album containing a series of satirical prints accompanied by inscriptions. These prints, meant to provide a sharp critique of the world of functionaries, contractors and small-minded urban folk, were to be entitled *Moral and Critical Scenes from Daily Life*. However, Bernadskii, closely aligned with the political group *petrashevtsy*, was sentenced to public execution for his subversive activities. At the eleventh hour the Tsar commuted the sentence to that of internment and hard labour, but Fedotov was unable to recover from the adverse publicity resulting from his association with Bernadskii. Following this incident, the artist's commissions dried up and he lived the remaining few years of his life impoverished and increasingly insane. Fedotov died in a psychiatric hospital in 1852.
Despite dropping out of the St. Petersburg Academy in 1866, Solomatkin enjoyed success during the 1860s; however, he broke with the professional art world in the 1870s.

produced as cheap popular prints that mocked the enemy.[31] In *The Retreat of the French Cavalry Who Ate Their Horses in Russia*, 1812, the officer leading the retreating troops commands his men forward with a telescope he holds in his right hand (Fig. 146). The ridiculous nature of the scene is enhanced by the fact that the fleeing cavalry no longer ride their horses, which they were forced to eat to survive. Instead the commanding officer rides a child's stick-horse; he is followed by a man seated on a bugle, four others ride their firearms, one rides a lance decorated with their banner, and a decrepit looking soldier riding his sword brings up the rear. Terebenev overemphasized their facial features to the point of absurdity, giving them exaggeratedly elongated, hooked noses. These works were extremely popular, epitomizing the intense feelings of Russian patriotism then prevalent.

Caricatures produced in the aftermath of the 1905 Revolution also influenced Larionov. Evgeni Lancere, for example, in *Funeral Feast*, published in *Hellish Post* [*Adskaia Pochta*] in 1906, depicts the Semenov regiment's celebration following the successful completion of a massacre (Fig. 147). The officers sit around a table brimming with alcohol, cigarettes and fruit, while the soldiers in their command stand behind them, no doubt singing their praises as demonstrated by the boastful look of the officer to the far right of the illustration. *Application to the Tsar*, *ca.* 1905–06, focuses upon the Ukrainian districts of Poltava and Khakov, an

---

Poverty and alcoholism haunted him for the last decade of his life, yet, although he spent most of this time as a homeless vagrant, he never abandoned painting.

[31]A representative sampling of Terebenev's caricatures of the French troops can be found in A. Kaganovich, *Ivan Ivanovich Terebenev, 1780–1815* (Moscow, 1956).

area of peasant insurrection and military mutiny during the events of 1905–06 (Fig. 148). Here the regions' landowners were promised 800,000 rubles for the peasants, or "fresh meat," that they supply as replacements for mutineers from the Tsarist army. Grand Duke Obolenskii is shown presenting Nicholas II with a token male "conscript," whom the Grand Duke has coerced into serving by kneeling upon and threatening him with the knife held in his right hand. Pleased with the remuneration, the Ukrainian landowners drunkenly pledge that their men will fight "to the last drop of blood."

Whereas the post-1905 caricatures make bold statements against the Tsarist regime and its agents, Larionov, following the lead of Terebenev, teases the viewer. Unlike Terebenev, however, Larionov did not exaggerate the positive national characteristics of the Russian soldiers that he portrayed. These are not classical heroes, but objects of derision. Already in 1909 Larionov created paintings that show these elements.[32] His *Officer at the Hairdresser's* presents the viewer (and the censor!) with his own caricature of the heroic officer (Fig. 68).

Painted at a time when Larionov was interested in lampooning dandies, *Officer at the Hairdresser's* is a deliberate parody of the ostentatious nature of status, in this instance the pretensions of both the officer and the hairdresser. Just as *Walk in a Provincial Town* is a satirical look at the affectations of Russian middle-class society, *Officer at the*

[32]Scholars do not agree on the dating of this canvas. Pospelov assigns the years 1908–09; Bowlt to 1909; and Parton to 1910–12. Stylistically, *Officer at the Hairdresser's* is not in accordance with Larionov's other works of 1908 (e.g. *Fishes* and *Bathers*). I believe that

Hairdresser's approaches the officer in the same manner (Fig. 11). Larionov presented the viewer with caricature-like portrayals of these figures.[33]

Larionov depicted the man in profile, traditionally a more idealizing means of representation here negated by the artist's Neo-primitivist vocabulary. Larionov's officer is a dandy more concerned with his appearance than his troops. He sits in the hairdresser's chair and stares into the mirror with a look of adoration; he appears mesmerized by his own countenance.

The officer's sword commands the viewer's attention as this light-bluish object is juxtaposed against darker items, including the officer's uniform and the floor. The size and placement of this weapon at the front of the picture plane follows the conventional means of displaying prominently the symbol of the officer's might, as in Desarnod's *The Battle of Bordino* (Fig. 138). Desarnod virtually cleared the area between the viewer and the sword whereas Larionov placed the weapon in a confined area which renders it useless.

The tassel and curtain at the top of the scene are reminiscent of a stage setting, which emphasizes the comical critique of the heroic officer. Indeed they are similar to Larionov's earlier portrayal of the tassels and curtain seen in *Puppet Theatre* of the late 1890s (Fig. 150). The tassel

---

both visually and thematically this work fits in with Larionov's dandy paintings of 1909–10.

[33]Both the hairdresser and the waiter may have been taken from the drunken figure on the bottom right of the caricature *The Ruling Class Feasts and Whores While the People Suffer and Toil*, published in *Satire* [*Satira*] in 1906 (Fig. 149). Anonymous, "The Ruling Class Feasts and Whores While the People Suffer and Toil," *Satira*, 1, 1906.

hangs within the hairdresser's reach, and were he to pull it the curtain would fall between the audience and the figures thus enabling the hairdresser to finish the job in privacy – but which job? A simple haircut or something more sinister? This stage could even be a fair-ground booth.[34] The menacing nature of this is similar to that found in the *Petroushka* puppet shows that enjoyed great popularity popular amongst Russians during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The eighteenth-century popular print *The Barber Wants to Cut the Old Believer's Beard* is a pictorial source for this painting (Fig. 49).[35] In his quest to Europeanize Russia Peter the Great issued a decree in 1705 proclaiming that all Russians must wear European costume and requiring all men excepting peasants and priests shave their beards. As Old Believers considered the shaving of the beard blasphemous, Peter's mandate was met with strong resistance.

This well-known print was used to ridicule the Old Believers.[36] Larionov, in his version, replaced the object of derision with the officer.[37] Why would he have lampooned officers so? This would have had special significance for his audience, which included officers and members of their social strata. Moreover, a preening conscript would have been less effective.

---

[34]I thank Christina Lodder for pointing this out to me.

[35]This connection was first recognized by Bowlt in "Neo-primitivism and Russian Painting," *The Burlington Magazine*, CXVI, 1974, p. 137.

[36]This *lubok* is thought to have been a useful means of propaganda in announcing Peter's decree to the public while simultaneously ridiculing the Old Believers. The Old Believers responded by satirizing Peter the Great in *Kazan Cat*. Parton, *Larionov*, p. 79.

[37]It is of interest that Larionov replaces the schismatic Old Believer with a beardless officer whose life is devoted to following the orders of the Tsar.

Larionov also subverted the criteria of high art and borrowed the visual vocabulary, e.g. simplified forms, the elongation of the barber-figure, the over-sized scissors and the sinuous line of the foliage and the hillside that has been applied to the table leg, from this popular print. That Larionov should have turned to and paraphrased such a well-known *lubok* that was overtly satirical and political clearly establishes the provocative nature of this work.

5.4 Pictorial Analysis

Both stylistically and thematically *Officer at the Hairdresser's* is a precursor to the soldier series of 1910–11, as Larionov further developed this theme in this group of paintings.[38] He exhibited the first canvases from this series at the first Knave of Diamonds show held in Moscow from December 1910 to January 1911, two months after joining the army.[39] It is significant that the artist should first exhibit works from this series at the Knave of Diamonds, which was organized specifically with the intention of providing artists who objected to the stagnant policies of existing groups and societies with an alternative forum for displaying their works. Larionov and Goncharova were founders of this group, and Larionov even suggested the provocative title, which was not put forth simply because he liked the sound of the words together, as he had once suggested, but

[38]Due to the traditional treatment afforded *Soldiers Playing Cards*, *ca.* 1904–06, it is not considered a stylistic and ideological precursor, but rather a conventional painting on a similar theme that predates Larionov's soldier series proper.
[39]*Soldiers* (cat. 107) and *Salvo* (cat. 118).

because of the recalcitrant nature of the term.[40] As previously discussed, *Bubnovyi valet* was a contemporary expression for prisoners, and the artists appropriated this term to highlight their perceived role as outcasts both socially and artistically. The term also held special significance for the conscripts. Prior to military reform conscripts were required to wear convicts' uniforms while en route to their units.[41] This indicates that Larionov also may have considered his impending military service when he chose the name. It also suggests that he linked conscripts with outsiders, and it is likely that this connection was important for his choice of this theme.

As the name of a playing card Knave of Diamonds also incorporates notions of gambling and games of chance, both of which would have appealed to Larionov.[42] Coupled with the bold style and subject matter of the paintings he exhibited, as well as the potential risk of involving himself in the project while in the army, the name suggests that Larionov at this time wanted to be considered a radical both socially and artistically.

The social structure of the army must first be considered before addressing Larionov's soldier series. In the military officers were mistrusted and conscripts were treated like third-class citizens.[43] Livshits,

---

[40]Pospelov, *Bubnovyi valet*, pp. 98–104.
[41]Bushnell, *Mutiny Amid Revolution*, p. 8.
[42]Larionov, along with many of his fellow avant-garde artists, collected playing cards. This information came to me via Bowlt, Seminar on Russian Modernism, University of Southern California, December 1992.
[43]Officers were mistrusted and seen as representatives of the establishment. Contemporary public opinion also blamed the officers for the failures of the Russo-Japanese War as well as for turning against the people in the 1905 Revolution.

for example, classified officers as "...profoundly ignorant ... whose world wide view was limited by the rules and regulations of garrison duty."[44] Army life was gruelling for conscripts as there was a great divide between them and the officers they served. In *Double-Headed Eagle to Red Flag* [*Ot dvuglavogo Orla k krasnomu znameni*] a soldier of working background recalls his own experience, explaining that an officer will never be close to the men under him as he is like a "magistrate or a police officer."[45] Public opinion perceived officers as representative of Peter the Great's Europeanized Russia and the peasant conscripts as embodying all that is traditional.[46] Prospective conscripts were well aware of the harsh realities of army life, as captured in the popular lament:

> The spring torrents will pour out,
> Our bitter tears will flow,
> During training, parent, during torment.
> They will beat us unfortunates without mercy,
> They will beat us, parent, until we bleed,
> Unto death they will beat our miserable heads,
> They will drive us, poor soldiers, through the gauntlet.[47]

Conscription was considered so harsh in fact that, even after Dmitrii Miliutin's military reforms reduced the term of service from 25 years to between four and six years, families regarded the peasant draftee

---

[44]Livshits, *The One and a Half-Eyed Archer,* p. 109. This is reminiscent of the sentiments of the poet Alfred de Vigny, who, in 1835, after completing his term of service, stated, "The army is both blind and dumb. It strikes at whatever faces it from wherever it is ordered to go. It is a huge entity that is transformed and that murders; but also it suffers." *Servitude et grandeur Militaires* (Paris, 1913), p 77. For information on de Vigny's influence in Russian literature see Waclaw Ledniki, "Miekiewicz in the Mirror of the Poetry of Alfred de Vigny," *California Slavic Studies*, 1, 1960, pp. 1–57.

[45]See Bushnell, *Mutiny Amid Repression*, p. 22.

[46]Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read*, p. 4. Brooks also states that service in the army was seen to provide peasant conscripts with new patterns of behaviour, of dress and of cleanliness. They were given, according to contemporary sentiment, "a human finish." (p. 11).

as lost forever.[48] The conscript's family would actually arrange a funeral feast and perform other such rites at his departure. Songs and legends reflect this mood of loss and abandonment. What is perhaps the earliest extant lament begins:

> Child of my heart, to whom are you abandoning me?
> To whom are you entrusting your parents' home?
> Our fields will be overgrown with grass, our hut with moss.
> I, your poor old mother, must now wander the world.
> Who will warm me in my decrepitude, who will shade me from the heat?
> Who will give me food and drink?[49]

Approximately 89 per cent of conscripts were of peasant origin and they were exploited as serfs; the regimental camps were organized in the same manner as pre-emancipation estates, with the commanding officer assuming the position of the landowner.[50] Because the Imperial Government continually cut military budgets, regiments were forced to be self-sustaining units, which required animal husbandry and the farming of the majority of their own food. Conscripts were also dispatched for migratory labour, with the majority of their wages going towards the operational expenses of the camps and to the commanding officers. Soldiers were also required to provide many of their own supplies, including spoons, soap, blankets and boots, as well as materials required

---

[47]E.V. Barsov, *Prichitania severnogo krania*, v. 2 (Moscow, 1882), p. 220. See Bushnell, *Mutiny Amid Repression*, p. 6.

[48]During the eighteenth century conscription was for life, but it was reduced to 25 years in the nineteenth century. A series of reforms followed, and between 1874 and 1905, terms of service fluctuated from four to six years. For more information see Bushnell, *Mutiny Amid Repression*, pp. 5–9.

[49]A.N. Radishchev, *Puteshstvie iz Peterga v Moskvu* (Moscow, 1966), p. 174. See Bushnell, *Mutiny Amid Repression*, p. 6.

[50]"The Russian soldier is convinced that he and his officer are different kinds of people, that the latter is lord and … knows more than he." "Distiplina v russkoi armii," *Razvedchik*, 22 September 1903. See Bushnell, *Mutiny Amid Repression*, p. 2.

for the upkeep of the regimental equipment. As, for example, the cost of repairing their boots exceeded their annual salary the soldiers were forced to sell portions of their already limited food rations or to write home for the money to meet these needs. Some soldiers even resorted to begging in the streets for survival.[51]

Conscripts were banned from smoking in public or in the presence of officers, from using trams or from travelling above third class on railways and from entering establishments where alcohol was served, like clubs, bars, taverns and restaurants.[52] In many garrison towns they were greeted by signs which read "No soldiers or dogs," which forbade the conscripts from walking along the streets and in the gardens. Of course volunteers like Larionov were in a better situation than ordinary soldiers. As Livshits recounts, the "...life... of the volunteers was a paradise in comparison with the convict-like existence of the soldiers brought in by recruitment."[53] Officially, volunteers were only released from the gruelling morning drills and from domestic chores; informally, however, officers treated them far more leniently than conscripts.[54]

It is these conditions that Larionov encountered during his period of military service, and he was shocked by them. Kandinsky wrote that he "was quite shattered" by Larionov's account of "the command in the

[51]Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read*, p. 14.
[52]Bushnell, *Mutiny Amid Repression*, p. 10.
[53]Livshits, *The One and a Half-Eyed Archer,* p. 104.
[54]Ibid.

army."[55] It is this grim reality of the conscript's life in the military that Larionov focused on in some of the paintings in his soldier series.

Larionov's *Soldiers* and *Resting Soldier* belong to the group of soldier paintings that provide a social commentary. Four versions of *Soldiers* have been documented to date, and they all depict a group of off-duty soldiers playing cards on the ground.[56] In the "first" version the figure closest to forefront of the picture plane lies on his left side (Fig. 151).[57] A cigarette hangs from his mouth as he stares out at the viewer. Behind him two fellow soldiers play cards as a third stares out, again at the

---

[55]Kandinsky, *Wassily Kandinsky and Gabriele Münter*, p. 83.

[56]The so-called "first" version of *Soldiers* is currently located in a private collection in London. The "second" version of this work, which I shall call version 2a (or the *Bubnovyi valet Soldiers*), was first illustrated in *Bubnovyi valet* (Moscow, 1910) and can also be found in Gordon, *Modern Art Exhibitions*, vol. I (Munich, 1976) illustration 676, p. 186. This version has been repainted at least twice, and I refer to these versions as 2b (or the Eganburi *Soldiers*) and 2c (or the LACMA *Soldiers*), respectively. Version 2b was first reproduced in Eganburi's monograph of 1913. The painting is also reproduced in Parton, figure 31, p. 35. 2c is the final version of the painting, currently owned by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and reproduced in Gray, *The Russian Experiment*, plate 61, p. 96.

[57]This version of the painting has been traditionally labelled as the first version and, although it is now generally accepted that the work was completed no earlier than 1910, it has been dated as early as 1908. This is primarily due to the inscription found in the background that reads "period of service 1908." To date I have been unable to locate any documentary evidence suggesting that this work is indeed the first version. This is the only work that identifies 1908 as the term of service, and it would follow that if this work was in fact the first version then the other versions would have been produced shortly thereafter. Stylistically, the lack of definition and the vantage point of this work is in keeping with earlier works; in later soldier paintings Larionov pushed the action to the forefront of the picture plane and he rendered detail differently. However, exhibition reviews of 1908 indicate that at this point Larionov was still working and exhibiting in a Post-Impressionist style. 1908 is also too early for the inclusion of the graffiti as Larionov did not begin to add text to his paintings until late 1910. It is possible that this work was painted at a later date both in a self-conscious "earlier" style as a means of predating this work to 1908 and the "second" version to 1909 or early 1910. Chronologically, it seems unlikely that Larionov would have painted this work before exhibiting version 2a at *Bubnovyi valet* in December 1911. It is more likely that he painted this work after the second version and quietly slipped it into his *oeuvre* to predate this series and the development of his Neo-primitivist style, especially with the inclusion of text. Larionov may have done this to assert that Russian artists, not their French counterparts, were the first to turn to this in the twentieth century. Larionov discusses Picasso's use of collage in "Rayist Painting," but he does not specifically mention the inclusion of lettering. Larionov, "Rayist Painting." See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, p. 97.

viewer, instead of watching the game. A dog and a duck have wandered onto the scene, indicating that this is a rural environment. Empty bottles are strewn about, and a saddle lies on the ground behind the men to their right. This object leads the viewer to the figure of the horse drawn upon the wall behind it.[58] Two swords lean against the far right of this wall where "term of service 1908" [srok sluzhby 1908] has been scribbled in the area between the horse and the swords.

Although this canvas has been labelled as the first version, it is not the rendition illustrated in the publication accompanying the exhibition. The Knave of Diamonds catalogue verifies that the painting exhibited from December 1910 to January 1911 under the title *Soldiers* is in fact the second version of this painting.[59] Although the catalogue and Gordon both contain poor-quality illustrations, this is obviously not the same composition found in the version described as the "first."

In the painting reproduced in the catalogue Larionov transformed the resting soldier into a lively accordion player. The figures are absorbed in their own activities and no longer look out at the viewer. The dog is now a pig and the duck has disappeared. The pig produces an even more rural environment and carries with it associations of filth, further denigrating the soldiers' surroundings while adding an element of

---

[58]This can be related to primitive cave painting. In *Rayist Painting* Larionov mentions the neglect of art of the Stone age, and Goncharova refers to the Stone age and cave art as "the dawn of art," in the preface to the catalogue of her solo exhibition. Larionov, "Rayist Painting." Goncharova, "Preface." See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, pp. 57, 94.

[59]*Bubnovyi valet* (Moscow, 1911). This is also confirmed in Gordon, illustration 676, p. 186. As it is impossible to produce a legible copy of the images found in *Bubnovyi valet* and *Gordon*, this version of the painting has not been illustrated in this thesis.

humour.[60] The whole composition is now closer to the viewer. Larionov has emphasized one of the bottles by placing it in the foreground and enlarging it. He has also added a third, even larger, bottle to the right of the accordion player.[61] Also, the saddle is closer to the edge of the painting, and the horse drawn on the wall has been enlarged. The text, previously confined to the wall, is now scattered throughout the painting. Some of the words now emanate from the soldiers' mouths in voice-bubble-like configurations similar to those in cartoons.[62] Larionov also added the word "*piva*," the phonetic spelling of the word *pivo* or beer, often used by semi-literate Russians, to the right of the accordion player, emphasizing the soldiers' low social standing.

In version 2b, illustrated by Eganburi in 1913, Larionov enhanced the details resulting in a more precise rendering of the subject (Fig. 152).[63] The word "*piva*" appears above a bottle delineated in a dark outline.

In the final rendition, version 2c, Larionov darkened his palette, producing the darkest painting of his soldier series (Fig. 153). The third bottle is now rendered in a green that echoes the colour of the soldiers'

---

[60]Pork was the most common meat, and in many cases the only meat, consumed by the Russian peasant, and this was generally reserved for specific festivals. It is likely that this association would have been noted by Larionov's audience. For the significance of pork in the peasant diet, see Smith and Christian, *Bread and Salt*, pp. 264–66.

[61]Owing to the lack of clarity in the *Bubnovyi valet* and Gordon reproductions, which serve as the only record of this canvas before it was repainted, I am unable to state whether the lighter area of paint next to the accordion player is in fact a bottle. However, the third bottle is definitely included by 1913 as indicated by 2b, Eganburi's illustration.

[62]Again, neither reproduction of 2a is clear enough for an exact reading of the text. However, when taken in conjunction with the two later versions an approximate reading of the text can be considered.

[63]The reproduction of the work itself is much clearer in Eganburi; however, even when allowing for this when comparing the *Bubnovyi valet* illustration with that of Eganburi it is obvious that Larionov not only sharpened the image when reworking it but also paid greater attention to his use of detail, which he now rendered in a more general manner. Details no longer dominate the painting as they had done in the earlier version.

uniforms. Larionov also used a bolder outline to delineate objects, as seen in the accordion, the bottles and the playing cards.

In these paintings Larionov illustrated the miserable surroundings of the soldier in a deliberately crude and direct manner. He presented the viewer with a non-heroic portrayal of life in the army, specifically barrack life. In contrast to traditional representations of heroic soldiers, in Larionov's paintings the swords have been moved to the background where they take on a less important role and lose their symbolic reference to power and might. Conscripts, not officers, are for the first time the subjects of these paintings.[64]

Larionov transformed traditional genre scenes of officers amusing themselves with intellectual pursuits, such as *The Reception Room of Count A. Benkendorf*, a watercolour of the late 1820s by an unknown artist, where they play a game of chess, or Aldolf Jebens' *A Camp Scene Near Krasnoe Selo*, 1849, portraying them in a game of draughts, into social commentaries referring to the abominable conditions endured by conscripts (Figs 154–155).[65] These are "naïve paintings of scenes from soldiers' lives that scantily depict the depths of their hovels," and it is

[64]This is why Eganburi states that after his tour of duty Larionov portrays, "altogether new subjects... to which nobody had previously turned his attention." *Natalia Goncharova Mikhail Larionov*, p. 33.

[65]Groups of soldiers conversing is another popular representation of off-duty regiment life; Fedotov's *At the Camp by the Front Line: A Group Portrait of the Officers of the Finland Regiment*, 1840–41, and Gustav Schwarz's *Unter-officers of the Life-Guard Finland Regiment with the Camp in the Background*, 1849, are typical examples of this genre. (Figs 156–157).

precisely this that separates Larionov from previous artists' depictions of military scenes.[66]

Larionov's *Soldiers* shows the men directly on the ground in dirty quarters that they share with farm animals. The squalid scene dispels any myth of life in the barracks as glamorous – a myth engendered by works such as Fedotov's *The Arrival of a Palace Grenadier at his Former Company of the Finland Regiment*, 1850, where light-hearted soldiers eagerly engage in various activities, including cleaning their weapons and practising drills (Fig. 158). Larionov, on the other hand, presented his audience with a drunken soldier singing a lewd song as he plays the accordion while his companions are involved in a heated game of cards. Fedotov's clean and spacious barracks have been transformed into an ambiguous environment. The monochromatic background denies any real feeling of spatial recession and objects in the painting appear to be weightless. The deliberately smeared brushwork is aggressively daubed onto the canvas, and the colours are heavily mixed with grey and ochre to emphasize the dirty reality of the life of the soldier. This earthy realism is even more direct because of the pig and the vulgar graffiti, which Larionov may have copied verbatim from the barrack walls.

The words beer [*piva*], above the bottle on the right of the accordion player; soldier [*soldat*], over the accordion player himself; and sabre [*sablia*], on the wall above the two swords are used to identify these objects. This practice is taken directly from popular sources. In icons and

[66]Michel Seuphor, "Redécoverte du Rayonnisme" in *Gontcharova et Larionov.*

lubki, the text was often used to identify saints or heroes, but here Larionov uses it to identify drunken soldiers and their accoutrements. Further he utilized the text in the form of coarse graffiti, completely disregarding the revered nature of its sources.

The kneeling soldier on the left says "*futus mamalui.*" Malmstad has pointed out that when the first word is separated into *fu tus* this phrase translates to "ugh an ace, mamalui."[67] His opponent utters "*durak*," which literally means "fool," but is also the name of a popular card game. The accordion player's remarks are much more colourful. The first word out of his mouth is either *bliad*, meaning "whore", or *balda*, meaning "blockhead", and this is followed by *pizda*, "cunt", which would more logically succeed *bliad* rather than *balda*. Larionov also used *bliad* in *The Whore*, 1913, a drawing linked to his prostitute series, suggesting that here too this is the word used (Fig. 95). Since these words emanate from the drunken accordionist, it is reasonable to assume that they are the lyrics of a lewd soldier's song, no doubt one Larionov learned while fulfilling his military duty. Finally, the scribble to the right of the horse reads *ai chudnyi mesiats*, "ay wondrous moon," which may have been taken from another song.

In these works, Larionov seems to have claimed that there is no longer room for refinement and enlightenment in the contemporary art

---

cinquante ans à saint germain-des-prés, ed. by T. Loguine (Paris, 1971), p. 96.
[67]*Tus* is the phonetic spelling of the word *tuz* and *mamalui* is "a meaningless complaint." Malmstad, "The Sacred Profaned," p. 162.

world.[68] Artists must now present the common man explicitly and open the viewer's eyes to his plight. Romanovich's reminiscences support this:

> And so, first and foremost, Larionov is recognized as a great realist. Nowhere has the soldier's life been told as Larionov did it. It was not an outward description, not sketches and not pictures apropos of vision only. This is a soldier's life as seen from within. Larionov's soldiers are not simply portrayed, they speak, function and, above all, express themselves. Never was there such a transformation in his heroes.[69]

Romanovich asserts that Larionov did not embark on this search for the reality of contemporary life merely for artistic innovation, but for truth:

> As in his works of 'sign-board style' this was not a creation of style. Nothing was further from the aim of the artist. And so in his enthusiasm with soldiers' art he felt, by his nature, what he was always striving towards: towards the truth of people's art.[70]

Resting Soldier, which can be seen as the culmination of the first category of paintings in the soldier series, was exhibited at Larionov's solo exhibition of December 1911 (Fig. 160). Here the soldier's right hand

---

[68]Larionov's representation of military life is in direct contrast to his earlier painting of *ca.* 1904–06 entitled *Soldiers Playing Cards* where he adhered to a more conventional treatment of the subject matter both stylistically and thematically (Fig. 159). Executed in the impressionist style favoured by the artist during this period, the palette is lighter and more attention is paid to the individual brush strokes. This is in opposition to *Soldiers* where broad areas of expressive colour have been aggressively daubed onto the canvas. *Soldiers Playing Cards* depicts a group of off-duty soldiers engaged in a game of cards: there is no alcohol or bawdy behaviour and the scene takes place in a light and airy outdoor setting that is clean and bright. Painted in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War and possibly after the bloody events of the 1905 Revolution, this work is rather innocuous. The soldiers themselves are portrayed as respectable members of society who could aptly defend Russia. This suggests that Larionov did not turn to this theme for more antagonistic and artistically innovative ends until later in his career after he developed Neo-primitivism. This earlier work again demonstrates Larionov's familiarity with traditional depictions, such as Jeben's *Camp Scene Near Krasnoe Selo* and Fedotov's *At the Camp Near the Front Line: A Group Portrait of Officers of the Finland Regiment*, as well as the fact that he had become more socially aware during the period in which he executed the soldier series (Figs 155–156).

[69]Romanovich, "Vospominaniia o M.F. Larionove," pp. 129–30.

rests on his hip while his left hand holds what looks like a pouch of tobacco. He looks down towards this object, unaware of the viewer's presence. On the left is a shovel leaning against a wall again featuring line drawings and graffiti.

The unnaturally twisted position of the figure is like that of the wounded and dying soldiers depicted in numerous battle-scene *lubki*, such as *Russia's War with Japan*, 1904, where the posture of the figure clutching his leg in the foreground of a battle scene is remarkably similar to that of Larionov's (Fig. 142). However, Larionov transformed the figure into a non-heroic looking squaddy, who leisurely smokes. The barracks are also anti-heroic, with a shovel resting against the wall, not the traditional sword. The painting, then, speaks of the menial tasks conscripts were given, like digging and shovelling.

Malmstad states that the "...soldier lies at ease, smoking after his labours (probably digging trenches judging by the spade behind him...)," but this is highly unlikely since conscripts spent more of their time as labourers than in military training.[71] Larionov provided a first-hand account of the empty life of conscripts, the reason why Romanovich called him a great realist. The ineffectual nature of this soldier in case of a crisis was noted by a contemporary critic, who wrote:

> Here we have espied
> a soldierly type. Phew!
> His belly on one side
> Legs all askew...
> No eyes at all, if you please

---

[70]Ibid.

[71]Malmstad, "The Sacred Profaned," p. 159.

Where'd they go?
To such men as these
The army must say no![72]

The overall feeling of boredom and relaxation can be related to Fedotov's *Encore, Again Encore!*, 1851–52, where an officer is seen training a dog to jump over a stick (Fig. 161). However, while Fedotov placed the figure and the dog in a clean, cosy interior, Larionov presented a conscript in squalid barracks whose only consolation is his tobacco.

In Larionov's painting on the wall is written "term of service 1910, 1911, 1909" [*Srok sluzhby* 1910 1911 1909]. This is perhaps an actual reference to Larionov's military tenure, except for the date 1909, the significance of which remains unclear.[73] On the left is a line-drawn horse and a naked woman. The artist's initials, "M.L." are under last the drawing slightly to the right. In addition to assigning authorship, this inscription may also relate to the graffiti clusters traditionally surrounding icons and images of Saints. These inscriptions are considered an alternate act of worship, and initials or symbols are usually scribbled or carved as appeal for divine intervention.[74] Although this rite was discouraged by the clergy and became regarded as a folk custom unsuitable for the higher strata of society, it has endured in Russia throughout the twentieth century. Larionov's placement of his initials next to a naked woman suggests that

[72]" A modest reviewer," "Osliny khovst," *Golos Moskvy*, 15 March, 1912.
[73]Larionov may have added 1909 to predate his term of military service in support of an earlier dating of these canvases.
[74]The prevalence of graffiti that has survived in Russian churches indicates that the practice of inscribing a name or symbol in a church or at a holy place was indeed an act of worship. Bushnell, *Moscow* Grafitti*: Language and Subculture* (Boston and London, 1990), pp. 9–12, and *passim*.

he altered this traditional custom, to petition for the immoral, i.e. a woman who can provide sexual favours.[75]

Above the soldier is the inscription "*poslednii ras sra.*" *Poslednii* translates to "last". *Ras* is the phonetic spelling of the word *raz*, or "time," and *sra* is not a word in its own right.[76] Closer observation, however, reveals two more letters that have been blurred, so it actually reads as *sral*, the past tense of a vulgarism for defecate. Thus the phrase translates to "The last time I defecated," suggesting that the shovel is for digging a latrine. This extremely anti-heroic painting then can be seen as contrasting the life of a conscript with dung.

Salvo, *Soldier in a Wood*, *Soldier on Horseback*, *Head of a Soldier* belong to the group of soldier paintings that make political statements against the regime. In these works Larionov portrayed the Russian army either as a brutal entity or as clumsy, useless and inept, implying that the military cannot protect the Russian people. This suggestion would have been damning as it follows both the humiliating defeat of 1904 and the Tsarist army opening fire against the Russian people in the 1905 Revolution.

Salvo, or *Firing a Volley*, is the second work from the soldier series that Larionov exhibited at the Knave of Diamonds (Fig. 162). Eganburi

---

[75]This can also be related to the expressions of pre-adolescent love commonly found in children's graffiti, in which Larionov found the freedom to express provocative ideas. Mikhail Andreenko states that while in Paris in the 1920s: "Larionov made many visits to the area far from Buttes-Chaumont where my studio was located. He used to sketch some of the drawings scribbled on the walls by naughty children. They attracted him because the execution of them was lively, natural and without set rules." Michel Andreenko, "Mes Rencontres Avec Larionov," *Gontcharova et Larionov*, Longuine, 1971, p. 140.

dates the work as 1910, and it was exhibited in that year. Some scholars, however, question whether it was painted earlier. In Eganburi's monograph and at his one-man show held in 1911 at the Society of Free Aesthetics in Moscow the work is listed as 1911, even though the canvas had already been exhibited at the Knave of Diamonds in the previous year. Laboratory analysis indicates that a portion of the canvas has been repainted. Therefore 1911 may refer to the date when Larionov reworked this area.[77]

Here a group of soldiers stand at attention with their rifles aimed straight ahead. A cloud of smoke emanates from their firearms, indicating that they have already discharged the weapons at the command of the officer whose sword is raised. A second soldier is placed before the firing squad and a third stands guard at his post near the barracks. The rolling landscape is a luscious green, and two trees – one brown in bloom on the left and one grey and barren on the right – frame the line of soldiers. The grey tree also separates the men from their commanding officer.

Larionov employed a dark palette in which blues, greens, browns and greys predominate, and he applied the pigment in broad planes of rich colour. He did not push the composition forward as he had done in *Soldiers* and the figures are less discernible, both of which intensify the air of uncertainty.

---

[76]See Burleigh-Motley's note on illustration 71 in Gray, *The Russian Experiment*, p. 300, and Malmstad, "The Sacred Profaned," p. 159.
[77]*Nathalie Gontcharova Michel Larionov*, p. 36.

Firing squads were commonly represented in satirical drawings following the events of 1905. N.N. Troianskii's *Silly Woman-Folk Tale* [*Dura-Skazka*], also known as *She Lived for a Colourful Joke*, is one such example (Fig. 163).[78] Here, in the first frame, soldiers march towards a peasant woman who, with her hands placed firmly on her hips, throws her head back and shouts at the approaching men. In the next frame the line of soldiers have drawn their rifles and shot her. As in *Salvo*, a puff of smoke is seen directly above the weapons to indicate that the firearms have just been discharged. Beneath the illustrations both the story and the peasant's life are drawn to a close with the word *konets* [The End]. The explanatory anecdote beneath this pair of line drawings reads:

> She lived for a colourful joke. No matter what she does it is – all foolish.
> She went up to the soldiers and commanded, 'One, two, three! Or!' The soldiers opened fire and blew off her head.

In this illustration Troianskii portrayed the soldiers as a bunch of mindless automatons who question neither orders nor their source.[79]

In contrast A.M. Vakhrameev's *Military Execution* is a tense non-comical scene in which a bound and blindfolded man stands before his executioners (Fig. 164).[80] Vakhrameev placed his audience behind the condemned man, as if awaiting the same fate. *Execution* is a similarly discomforting scene. The viewer is about to witness a beheading (Fig.

---

[78]*Signal*, no 2, 1905.

[79]Livshits uses this term "automaton" when referring to his tenure in the army. "But the transformation of a man into an automaton was already taking place. Imperceptibly, out of an instinct of self-preservation, I began to possess the ability to make myself part of the circuit by turning an invisible knife-switch, and, of course, this two-millionth part possessed no symptoms of individual existence." Livshits, *The One and a Half-Eyed Archer,* pp. 110–11.

165).[81] A horrified onlooker steps forward, places his hand on the sword, dramatically attempting to push the executioner back and stop the decapitation. The strength of the image lies in the fact that it is unclear whether the interloper is successful in his bid to halt this barbaric deed.

Larionov's *Salvo* is equally disconcerting. The unheroic presentation and ambiguity of the scene makes it unsettling. Is this a pre-dawn drill or an execution? At what are they firing and what are the two unidentifiable objects in the distance? The depiction of a firing squad can be read as a straightforward commentary by Larionov on the brutalities committed by this regime and its soldiers who some saw as cold-blooded murderers, especially following the events of 1905.

Salvo is clearly influenced by naïve art. Larionov was interested in children's art at this time, and the impact of this genre on *Salvo* can be seen in the simplified schematic treatment of the landscape and the buildings. The flatness of the commanding officer, the economy of line, the exaggerated scale of his eye as well as his facial features, and the lack of differentiation between his hand and his weapon are all reminiscent of children's painting. These characteristics overlap somewhat with the stylistic devices commonly found in *lubki*, icon painting, shop signs and other traditional forms. Larionov did not limit himself exclusively to any one source. Instead he blended stylistic devices from a host of sources as a means of developing his own modern form of primitivism through which he could wage an attack on convention.

---

[80]*Gamaiun*, 1, 1905.

The child-like quality of the painting was noted by Franz Marc. After viewing the work at *Der Sturm* in 1913 he wrote to Kandinsky:

> Larionov painted a small *Salvo* soldatesque. It seems to me that the childish side of this picture is not without a backward educational taste.....[82]

The general interest in children's art in Russia falls in the period 1909–15. The most popular sources are contemporary publications, private collections and public exhibitions. As early as 1908 Kulbin extolled the importance of children's art in his publication *Free Art as the Basis of Life*.[83] This was shortly followed in 1909 by Lev Bakst's article in *Apollon* in which he mentioned children's art.[84] In 1911 the critic Tugendkhold contributed "Children's Drawings and their Relationship to Adult Art" to *Northern Notes* [*Severnye zapiski*]. Finally, in *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste* the artist David Burliuk linked children's art to the practice of free drawing.[85] He related this to the work of his avant-garde contemporaries, claiming that Larionov's soldier series exemplifies this practice.[86]

Goncharova traced the roots of Cubism to "Scythian stone images and painted wooden dolls sold at fairs" in her impromptu speech at the

---

[81]*Signal*, 2, 1905.
[82]Letter dated 30 September 1913, Franz Marc to Vasilii Kandinsky. Klaus Lankheit, *Wassily Kandinsky – Franz Marc: Briefwechsel* (Munich,1983), p. 241.
[83]Kulbin writes, "Not everyone has the gift of reading the rudiments of the art created by the most beautiful of animals – prehistoric man and our children – although its simpler." Kulbin, "Free Art." See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, p. 15.
[84]Bakst, "Puti Klassitsizma v iskusstve," *Apollon*, 2, 1909, p. 76.
[85]"In contrast to the academic canon, which sees drawing as a definite dimension, we can now establish the canon – of free drawing. (The fascination of children's drawing lies precisely in the full exposition in such works of this principle.)..." D. Burliuk, "Cubism (Surface – Plane)" from *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste* (Moscow, 1912). See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, p. 77.
[86]"The portraits of P. Konchalovskii and I. Mashkov, the *Soldier* Pictures of M. Larionov, are the best examples of Free drawing... (as also are the latest works of N. Kulbin)." Ibid., p. 77.

Knave of Diamonds on 12 February 1912.[87] Collections of children's paintings were owned by various members of the avant-garde, including Shevchenko and Vinogradov.[88] Larionov included objects from their collections in exhibitions that he organized, including Target and Original Icons and Popular Prints, both held in 1913. Works by the naïve artist Niko Piromanashvili were included in Target. Shevchenko also reproduced a work from his own collection in *The Principles of Cubism* [*Printsipy kubizma*], which also includes illustrations of Neo-primitivist canvases by both Goncharova and Larionov.[89] Artists were not the only members of the avant-garde interested in children's art. The poet Vasilii Kamenskii was also an avid collector. By 1913 the area of interest broadened to include children's poetry, which was both collected and published.[90]

Children's art was included in at least two exhibitions held between 1909 and 1911. The Izdebskii Salon, December 1909–July 1910,

---

[87]See Livshits, *The One and a Half-Eyed Archer,* p. 82.

[88]The catalogue of the exhibition lists I.D. Vinogradov. This is, however, a misprint as it should have head read N.D. Vonogradov. This is confirmed by a review of the exhibition published in *Golos Moskvy*. This review is cited in an essay by Nikolai Vinogradov's granddaughter Elena Borisovna Ovsiannikova, " The Role of the Moscow Architectural School in the Emergence of the Russian Avant-Garde," *New Perspectives on Russian and Soviet Artistic Culture*, ed. by J.O. Norman, trans. by Dr C. Cooke and J.O. Norman (London, 1994), p. 68. Ovsiannikova fails to provide further details of this review, and to date I have been unable to view *Golos Moskvy* for 1913. Both her relationship to Vinogradov and her access to his personal archive adds creedence to her claim. There is, moreover, no evidence of an I.D. Vinogradov.

[89]Shevchenko, *Printsipy kubizma* (Moscow, 1913).

[90]Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh are the best examples of this. Khlebnikov included two poems written by a 13-year-old Ukrainian girl in *Sadok Sudei II*. Kruchenykh's *Sobstvennye razskazky i risunki detei* (St. Petersburg, 1913) allegedly comprised stories by children ranging in age from seven to 11. It is thought, however, that some or perhaps even all of the material included was written by the poet himself. Larionov and Goncharova maintained close ties with these two literary giants, and they would most certainly have been aware of their endeavours.

contained paintings by four children.[91] As Larionov was also among the show's contributors, he would have known of these entries. The following year two rooms of children's paintings were included in the Moscow Salon.[92] Larionov was a member of the society as well as an exhibitor at the show and would, therefore, have once again been well aware of this. Given the artist's simultaneous interest in naïve and primitive art forms, he must have been influenced by these exhibitions. It is known that Larionov reworked the areas of smoke in *Salvo*, and it is possible that he modified the canvas for inclusion in the second exhibition.[93]

The influence of children's art in Larionov's series is also apparent in *Soldier in a Wood*, 1911, which depicts a lone cavalry soldier and his horse in a thick forest during a cigarette break, also in the Neo-primitivist style (Fig. 166). In this painting Larionov based the figure and the horse on children's toys, which were particularly popular in Russia.[94]

The rigid, wooden appearance of the soldier is clearly taken from children's toys. The exaggerated facial features, particularly the eyes and mouth, the abstraction of his uniform and the intensity of the colours are similar to that of both wooden and clay toys. Finally the inclusion of the

---

[91]The works were exhibited in four cities over the period of seven months: Odessa, 17 December 1909–6 February 1911; Kiev, 25 February–27 March 1910; St. Petersburg, 2 May–7 June, 1910; and Riga, 25 June–20 July 1910.
[92]The Second Izdebskii Salon, Odessa, December 1910.
[93]*Nathalie Gontcharova Michel Larionov*, p. 36.
[94]Horses and soldiers are represented throughout the Russian and the Soviet periods in various media. The subjects often follow contemporary interests, such as the War of 1812, the Russo-Turkish War and, during the Soviet era, the Bolshevik Revolution and the Civil War. These toys were popular with people of all social classes, from the privileged (e.g., Empress Catherine I [Peter the Great's wife] placed an order for 20 toys to be sent to the Imperial residence in St. Petersburg in 1721) to the peasants who made toys for their children. (These homemade toys, made by the entire family, ranged from

sword can be directly linked with wooden soldiers, the only type of toy made with implements of warfare.[95]

Spotted horses were the most common type represented in Russian toys regardless of the medium. The horse in *Soldier in a Wood* is stiff like the toys, with stumpy legs and spotted. Its features are squared. The abstract rendering of its mane and prominence of its eye also stem from the schematic representations in these sources.

The soldier's cigarette, however, is discordant with the toy-like quality of the figure. Michel Seuphor states that the success of Larionov's series of "naïve paintings of scenes from soldiers' lives" hinges upon this type of incongruity:

> It is a sort of regression to childhood, yet to a childhood that has already grasped the sophistication of the adult mind so as to better reject it.[96]

Taken on its own, the cigarette represents a simple pleasure and reinforces the relaxed nature of the soldier. However, it also serves to remind the viewer that the figure is not a toy but a man.

The horse assumes a more prominent position than the soldier, spanning three-quarters of the foreground. This emphasizes the empty saddle, which is closest to the centre of the picture. The overhanging branch makes it impossible for the soldier to mount his horse. The animal's reins are draped across the soldier's right arm. His sword is cut

---

rudimentary objects composed of household scraps to elaborate toys that they also sold to the public.)

[95]Lances, swords and bayonets are the weapons most commonly attributed to these figures.

[96]Seuphor, "Redécoverte du Rayonnisme," p. 96.

off by the edge of the canvas. The soldier is physically separated from the animal by either a stream or a fallen tree.

The organic nature of the environment is clear, and it contrasts with the inanimate soldier and horse. The soldier seems small and insignificant; he is lost against the backdrop, which, as tradition dictates, should ground the figure in the setting or enhance it by pushing it forward to focus the viewer's attention on the figure. Similar to the pig in *Soldiers*, a squirrel has joined the pair. The animal has its back to the soldier and, paying more attention to the surrounding leaves. Squirrel pelts were a source of income in many regions of Russia, while others considered the animal a mediator between the hunter and the gods.[97] Here Larionov reinforces the pagan role by placing the animal high in the trees which were thought to house the spirits. His soldier is either outsmarted by his prey or unaware of the deity's presence.

Larionov's soldier neglects his duty to enjoy a fleeting pleasure, and the squirrel's calmness reinforces the non-threatening nature of our supposed hero. As in *Officer at the Hairdresser's* and *Soldiers*, the placement of the sword emasculates the soldier by taking away his strength and might. Contrary to the traditional depiction of the mounted soldier, Larionov depicted him standing on the ground and separated from his horse by all sorts of obstacles. Hence this is the picture of a useless soldier.

---

[97]See Peg Weiss, *Kandinsky and Old Russia: the Artist as Ethnographer* (New Haven, 1995), p. 49.

Prior to the Russo-Japanese War, the Russian cavalry was renowned for its military success. During this conflict, however, the modern methods of military science used by the Japanese made the once mighty Russian forces appear obsolete in twentieth-century warfare.[98] This was attributed in part to the incompetence of the officer corps, many of whom, "never stopped in their flight until they got to Tieling, and then immediately proceeded to get drunk."[99] The Imperial government also underestimated the Japanese troops and failed to provide the necessary equipment.[100] This proved a crushing blow to Russian morale and demonstrated the need for resources to bring Russia into line with the contemporary world powers. Larionov's painting may be commenting on the ineffectiveness and failure of the Russian army.

In *Soldier on a Horse*, 1911, Larionov placed the soldier on a rearing horse in profile view against a rich grassy area in a conventional heroic posture (Fig. 167). A white tree trunk with two thin branches punctuates the left side of the image, and a patch of foliage is indicated by the green area of pigment in the upper left hand side of the canvas. A cut-off trunk sits on the ground beneath the horse's bent front legs. Although the grassy area is lush, the overall landscape is not as dense as that in *Soldier in a Wood* to ensure the legibility of the lettering in the

---

[98]For example, Prince Sergei Trubetskoi, Professor of Philosophy at Moscow University, approached the Tsar concerned about the "yellow danger, the new hordes of Mongols armed by modern… technology." Martha Bohachevskii-Chomaik, *Sergei N. Trubetskoi: An Intellectual Among the Intelligentsia in Prerevolutionary Russia* (Belmont, MA, 1976), p. 120.

[99]Report of the Swedish attaché's report to the U.S. Embassy in St. Petersburg, April 12/25, 1905, USDMR. See Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905*, p. 51.

[100]See Ibid., pp. 42, 43–47 and 50–53.

background. White Cyrillic characters are scribbled in the blue area immediately surrounding the figure – "8 e" in the section immediately behind the mounted soldier and "s k" above the horse's mane. When taken on their own, the individual letters mean nothing. Together, however, they form "8 esk," an abbreviation of "8 eskadron" or cavalry squadron number 8, and Larionov used the text as a means of identification.

The simplification of detail in this work indicates that it was executed after *Soldier in a Wood.* This development echoes that of the painting *Soldiers*, which can be seen as indicative of the development of the soldier series itself. The detail in his earlier works are more specific, but, as the series progresses, details become more generalized and are represented by broad areas of colour.

While Larionov here adhered more closely to the traditional representations found in *lubki* and icons, as well as to the higher genres of battle painting and military portraiture, he negated the heroicism of the figure by combining recognizable elements from these prototypes with children's art and toys upon which his figures are based. *Soldier on a Horse* is reminiscent of one of the two standard representations of St. George and the Dragon found in icons and *lubki* – that of a mounted warrior piercing a dragon with his lance (Fig. 168).[101] Larionov maintained the rearing horse and the text to identify the subject.

[101]In the remaining popular version the saved Princess is shown leading the now-tamed dragon back to her homeland. The King, Queen and various folk are also depicted watching the events from atop one of the city towers. Fifteenth- to seventeenth-century

Depictions of St. George, however, are usually aggrandized. In icons and *lubki* St. George's sword is an integral part of the character. The hero is depicted in action, at the moment when he slays the dragon; however, Larionov's soldier is unarmed, and there is no enemy visible. The dragon has been replaced by a sawn-off tree trunk. Particularly popular with both Russian artists and audiences alike, the narrative of St. George, the Patron Saint of Russia, was traditionally used to symbolize the triumph of good over evil. Larionov neutralized the symbolism by subverting this conventional representation.

The photograph of the Cavalry Captain N.A. Mailevskii of the Life-Guard Hussar Regiment, 1860s, shares many of the same attributes of the St George icon, including the treatment of the head of Mailevskii's horse (Fig. 169). In these works the horsemen have tightened their reins so that the animal will rear. In Larionov's work, however, the spotted horse stretches its head forward. This coupled with the tree stump underneath its the front legs, implies that the cavalry soldier is not a good rider since he cannot steer the animal around the obstacle.

Larionov's soldier sits on a blanket, not a saddle. The saddle also appears to be missing in *The Officer and Private of the Saint Petersburg Dragoon Regiment* of 1802–03 (Fig. 170). The blankets in *lubki*, however, have either an Imperial or a Regimental crest on them. The blanket in Larionov's painting is unadorned and rather ordinary, suppressing any reference to heroicism.

---

depictions often include a crowd running from the city gates as well as an angel flying

In *Smoking Soldier*, 1911, the almost full-length figure is depicted ambiguously and can be read as either sitting on an unseen support or standing in a grossly exaggerated *contrapposto* pose (Fig. 171). A curved white cigarette hangs from his mouth, and a small cloud of smoke rises from it. The figure's head tilts considerably to the left, so much so that his earlobe touches the greatcoat resting casually across his shoulders. The soldier holds this heavy garment in place with his raised left hand and his right hand falls on his bent right leg. The austere background is comprised of a series of visible yellow, brown and green brushstrokes. Here Larionov has omitted any use of text and the figure occupies nearly the entire picture plane. There is no sense of spatial recession in this painting, resulting in a constrained composition.

Smoking Soldier is similar to Fedotov's *Portrait of Pavel Petrovich Zhdanovich*, 1850–51, which was included in *Olden Times* [*Starye godi*] in 1907, and it is almost certain that Larionov was aware of this work (Fig. 172).[102] In this painting Fedotov presented the viewer with a half-length portrait of Zhdanovich who sits with his crossed wrists resting upon his lap. He holds a burning cigarette in his right hand. Theatrical lighting and a classical representation give Fedotov's sitter the refinement that Larionov's figure lacks, and this is enhanced by the contemplative mood of Zhdanovich whose glistening eyes stare out past the viewer. Larionov's anonymous soldier, on the other hand, appears to be propped clumsily

---

down to crown St. George.

[102]N. Romanov, "Maloizvestnye proizvedeniia Fedotova," *Starye godi*, 11, 1907, pp. 555–57.

against a wall or sitting on a stool as he stares out at the viewer with his head cocked. Unlike Zhdanovich, he is not sophisticated, but awkward.

The painting can also be compared to Cézanne's *Boy in a Red Vest*, *ca.* 1888–90.[103] The work comprises a three-quarter length portrait of a young boy standing in *contrapposto* before a voluminous brown curtain (Fig. 173). Cézanne emphasized form through the use of broad areas of colour in this painting. Likewise, Larionov constructed his figure by means of simple geometric shapes, and this imparts the figure with a sense of sculptural relief and gives it weight. The works also share a similar oval-shaped head, although Larionov tilted his more to the left, and both artists employed a bright red hue to accentuate the otherwise murky colours. Whereas Cézanne's figure directs his gaze downward, Larionov's soldier meets the viewer's.

Larionov's soldier recalls a puppet without strings, and such toys may have also been a source for this painting. These playthings were popular, and the Bogorodskoye region of the Vladimir Province is known for producing toys consisting of regiments of soldiers standing on two pivoted panels (Fig. 174). Given the artist's interest in toys and the proximity of the region to Moscow, Larionov was presumably aware of them. Upon opening and shutting these scissor-like supports, the figures

---

[103] *Boy in a Red Vest* was shown at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune, Paris in 1910, an exhibition reviewed by Tugenkhold in "Exhibitions of Cézanne and Vallotton in Paris," *Apollon*, 5, 1910, pp. 13–16. In this same year Morozov purchased Cézanne's *The Smoker* from Voillard, who once owned this work. It is possible that information pertaining to this exhibition and this painting reached Larionov at this time through Morozov or fellow Russian artists abroad at this time. Larionov may also have been aware of a German publication which illustrated *Boy in a Red Vest*, J. Meier-Graefe, *Paul Cézanne* (Munich, 1910), p. 53.

would move back and forth in rows. The stiff, clumsy depiction of the soldier in this painting gives the impression that he would move just as awkwardly.

Puppet themes can be found in satirical drawings following the 1905 Revolution. Sergei Chekhonin's drawing *The Folktale of a Mama and Her Unscrupulous Boys* depicts Tsar Nicholas surrounded by puppets with the faces of contemporary Russian figures (Fig. 175).[104] The Tsar is in control of the strings, and hence their actions. It is a biting commentary on autocracy as a form of government. In a take on the famous Russian character *Petroushka*, the Russian army is offered similar treatment in *The Chernigovo-Saratov Petrushki*, which appeared in the same issue of *The Spectator* [*Zritel*] (Fig. 176).[105] In the first cell the soldier in the puppet show clumsily beats a peasant with a long paddle; the text underneath reads "End!" or "Done For!". In the final cell the peasant is shown retaliating. He hits the soldier with greater force, as indicated by the lines emanating from the rounded end of the implement. The caption underneath exclaims, "Exactly!" In this drawing Chekhonin maintains that the peasant will in fact overthrow the existing system in Russia.

Smoking Soldier can also be related to military caricatures. During the War of 1812 Terebenev's portrayal of French troops mocked their supposed military might. *The Retreat of the French Cavalry Who Ate Their Horses in Russia* is a whimsical depiction of the humiliated French cavalry

[104]*Zritel*, 21, 17 XI 1905.
[105]Ibid.

on retreat from Russia (Fig. 146).[106] In *Play Acting* Terebenev asserted that the only way the French troops would capture the Russian forces would be to simulate the scene by making puppets out of sticks adorned with Cossack uniforms (Fig. 177). Larionov's *Smoking Soldier* is similarly absurd. However, instead of directing the satire towards a foreign enemy, he satirized the Tsarist regime.

The Head of a Soldier, 1911, like *Smoking Soldier*, was also calls traditional portraiture into question (Fig. 178). The figure in this painting stares out blankly at the viewer. His head and shoulders are confined to the picture plane with the canvas cropping the image at both his shoulders and his uniform hat. He is sloppily dressed with only half of his collar turned over properly and his medals, epaulettes and aiguilettes are missing. Again, there is no weapon. The background is rather plain with text scribbled across it. The first syllable of the word *soldat* overlaps his cap.

The format here is taken directly from icon painting, which Larionov again reinterpreted and updated. Similar to the Novgorodian icon *The Apostle Thomas*, fifteenth century, the soldier in Larionov's painting is placed squarely in the middle of the canvas and he occupies the bulk of the space (Fig. 179).[107] Also the elongated nose and the schematized treatment of the eyebrows of Larionov's soldier is similar to

---

[106]The leader, in the position of honour afforded the commander, rides a toy horse on a stick. This image would be revived in later conflicts with the German cavalry depicted riding a toy horse on a stick. See V.A. Denisov, *Voina i lubok* (Petrograd, 1916); and *Kartinki voina russkikh c nemitsamii* (Petrograd, 19[16]).

[107]Located in the N. Likhachov Collection until its presentation to the Russian Museum in 1913, this work was the subject of publications in 1906 and 1907. N. Likhachov, *Materialy dlia istorii russkogo ikonopisaniia*, tom 1 (St. Petersburg, 1906), p. 9, plate CLV, pl. 269. N. Likhachov, *Manera pismma Andreia Rubleva* (St. Petersburg, 1907).

those of Saint Thomas. Apart from text, both works have plain backgrounds that do not detract from the images themselves. Finally, the halo has been replaced by Larionov with the soldier's cap, which has been cropped in similar fashion.

The Head of a Soldier shares the same source as Larionov's *Self Portrait* of 1910–12 (Fig. 180). In both the asymmetrical collar is reminiscent of the treatment of the same area in *The Apostle Thomas*. A few slight drapery folds are suggested in the soldier painting, whereas in the *Self Portrait* they are more abundant and are rendered in a more stylized fashion. Larionov also included unadorned backgrounds with text in both works. In the *Self Portrait*, however, the text acts as an identifier. In *The Head of a Soldier* it is meant to shock and introduce a vulgar element of humour.

The text accompanying this painting serves not only to identify the figure as a soldier but also to present the public with one of Larionov's jokes. The words read as follows: "*soldat*" [soldier], across the top right of the painting; "*tvoiu*" [yours] immediately underneath *soldat* and to the right of the figure's face; "*tud*" [?] next to his right ear; "*pod*" [under] below *tud;* and *"mram*" followed by "*or*" [the combined syllables translate to marble] above his left shoulder. Larionov also placed the letters "*yt*" [?] to the left of the soldier's hat.

The word *soldat* is clearly used to identify the figure as a soldier. The remainder of the text, however is much more ambiguous. The inscription literally translates to: "[?] soldier your [?] under marble."

Larionov was certainly fond of his in-jokes, the majority of which, if not all, of his audience would have had difficulty understanding.

To decode the meaning behind this apparent gibberish a later version of this work must be considered. An altered version of this text appears in the version of the painting included with Alexander Block's poem *The Twelve* of 1920, and can be used to clarify the meaning.[108] Here Larionov separated the word *soldat* into two syllables, and, more importantly, he rearranged *yt* and *trud* to read *trudyt*, which when taken with the word *tvoiu* in *The Head of a Soldier* translates to something along the lines of "up yours." Therefore, the whole phrase can be translated as the exclamatory, "Soldier, up yours!" Malmstad states that with the addition of *pod mramor*, the text can be translated to "Soldier, up your you know what."[109] When this sort of offensive language is placed on an image so obviously grounded upon an icon format, it becomes as blasphemous as *The Head of a Bull*, 1912 (Fig. 181). This work is also based upon *parsuna* and icon painting techniques, such as those found in *The Vernicle*, late twelfth to early thirteenth century, Novgorod, which are now applied to a farm animal, making this perhaps the most blasphemous use of the format if one is to look at image alone (Figs 10 and 182). However, if text is to be considered, then *The Head of a Soldier* is equally as offensive.

[108]Malmstad, "The Sacred Profaned," p. 164.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter it has been argued that the paintings in Larionov's soldier series can be divided into two groups: paintings that provide a social commentary on the plight of the conscripts and paintings that make political statements questioning the authority of the military. In both of these categories Larionov debased traditionally revered sources that would have been immediately identifiable by his audience. It is clear that Larionov became more socially aware during his experience as a volunteer. Undoubtedly his tenure in the army influenced his presentation of this form of social commentary.

The challenging nature of both the style and the subject matter of these works results in a series of paintings that are unsettling both stylistically and thematically. In the first category of works, the conscripts are not portrayed as heroes or anti-heroes; he neither built them up nor put them down. In the second category he mocked the soldier as a symbol of patriotism. Larionov presented the viewer with two-dimensional figures in form, presentation and personality. The military men depicted have no substance, and are reduced to mere objects in these paintings. As a result, Larionov's soldier series is a comment on army life and its reduction of the individual.

---

[109]Ibid., p. 164.

Chapter VI
East Meets Autocracy: The Anti-assimilation Sentiment of Goncharova's Jewish Series, 1911–13

6.1 Introduction

Goncharova exhibited her first Jewish painting, simply entitled *Jews*, at the Union of Youth exhibition in St. Petersburg in December 1911.[1] It was not until December 1912 that she began to display works depicting Jewish themes regularly.[2] In 1913 she exhibited at least five paintings on Jewish subjects as part of her one-woman exhibition at the Art Salon in Moscow.[3] The following spring the artist pared the show down from 761 works to 249 for the St. Petersburg venue yet added another three Jewish paintings.[4] This marks the culmination of her depiction of this theme.[5]

---

[1]*Jews*, 1911 (cat. 14).

[2]In December 1912 Goncharova exhibited *Jews* (cat. 51b) at the World of Art exhibition in Moscow. In January 1913 she exhibited the same work in St. Petersburg (cat. 80). Two months later at the Moscow Target exhibition she showed *Jews*, 1912 (cat. 34); *Jews*, 1911 (cat. 36) and *Jewess*, 1912 (cat. 39).

[3]To date I have identified five works exhibited at the Art Salon with Jewish subject matter: *Jewish Family*, 1912 (cat. 417); *Monk with a Cat*, 1912 (cat. 491); *Jews*, 1912 (cat. 600); *Jews (primitive)*, 1911 (cat. 605); and *Jewess*, 1912 (cat. 607).

[4]Bowlt, "Jewish Artists and the Russian Silver Age," in *Russian Jewish Artists in a Century of Change, 1890–1990*, ed. by S.T. Goodman, ed. (New York, 1995), p. 52 n11, states that Goncharova contributed four Jewish scenes to her solo exhibition at Dobychina's Bureau in St. Petersburg. However, after consulting the exhibition checklist, I identify eight works with Jewish subject matter in this show: *Monk with a Cat* (cat. 4), *Jewish Family* (cat. 24), *Jews* (cat. 91), *Jewess in a Pink Cloak* (cat. 157), *Jews on the Street* (cat. 159), *Jews* (cat. 161), *Jewess on a Porch* (cat. 162) and *The Elder with Seven Stars (Apocalypse)* (cat. 249). I believe that she changed one of the titles from *Jewess* to either *Jewess in a Pink Cloak* or *Jewess on a Porch*. Unfortunately, documentary evidence and photographs which would serve to clarify this matter are, to my knowledge, unavailable.

[5]Goncharova produced between eight and twelve works with Jewish themes. *Monk with a Cat*, 1912; *Jewish Family*, 1912; *Jews*, 1911; *Jewess*, 1912; *Jewess in a Pink Cloak*, 1912; *Jews on the Street*, 1912, *Jews*, 1912; *Jewess on a Porch*, 1912; *Elder with Seven Stars (Apocalypse)*, 1912; *Jews: Sabbath*, 1912; *The Jewish Shop*, 1912; and *Jews of Various Ages*, *ca.* 1912. As Goncharova was known to exhibit a work under various titles, and owing to the vague nature of some of the titles assigned to her paintings in exhibition catalogues, the exact number of canvases belonging to the Jewish series is, to

There have been several volumes devoted to the representation of Jews and Jewish themes by Jewish artists in Russia;[6] however, Goncharova's brief period of preoccupation with Jewish subject matter has been virtually ignored by scholars.[7] This is perhaps because of her standing as a Christian. A brief discussion of Goncharova's contact with the Jews and of the status of Jews in Russian society will help illustrate the possible reasons for her choice of subject matter in spite of the fact that she was Russian Orthodox from an aristocratic background with strong cultural ties to her Russian heritage.

6.2 Goncharova and the Jews

Goncharova was descended from a long line of priests on her mother's side. Religion was an integral part of her life, and she was intrigued by its mystical nature, something she often tried to capture in her paintings. She was in fact buried according to the rites of Russian Orthodoxy. Her heritage was also important to her. She was raised in a

---

date, unknown. Until such time that any possible documentary evidence and photographs of these works either on display or in the artist's studio are unearthed, this matter will remain unclear. It is possible that the material that the Soviet Government removed from Goncharova and Larionov's Paris studio in 1987 will provide the solution to this conundrum. For more information, see Konstantin Akinsha et al., "The Strange, Illegal Journey of the Larionov-Goncharova Archive," *Art News*, 96, 1997, pp. 80–85.

[6]Susan Tumarkin Goodman, ed., *Russian Jewish Artists in a Century of Change, 1890–1990* (New York, 1995); Ruth Gabriel-Apter et al., *Tradition and Revolution: The Jewish Renaissance in Russian Avant-Garde Art, 1912–1928* (Jerusalem, 1987). *Masterpieces of Jewish Art*, 3 vols (Moscow, 1992–1993.); Yuri Olkhovsky, *Vladimir Stasov and Russian National Culture* (Ann Arbor, 1983); and Mariam Rajner, "The Awakening of Jewish National Art in Russia," *Journal of Jewish Art*, 16–17, 1990–1991, pp. 98–121. The most comprehensive bibliography on individual artists can be found in Goodman, *Russian Jewish Artists* and Gabriel-Apter, *Tradition and Revolution.*

[7]Bowlt, Lodder and Ezra Mendelsohn have briefly touched upon this topic. See, Bowlt, "Jewish Artists and the Russian Silver Age," pp. 40–53; Lodder, *Russian Painting of the Avant-Garde*, pp. 12–13; and Mendelsohn, ed., *Art and its Uses, the Visual Image and Jewish Society* (New York, 1990).

family that took great pride in their highly cultured legacy. Goncharova, as already mentioned in the introduction, was the great-niece and namesake of Pushkin's wife. As such, she felt an affinity with the poet and his legend.

During Goncharova's lifetime, very few Jews lived in her native province of Tula. Earlier, between 1796 and 1825, the region had been known as a centre of conversion to Judaism. In 1825 all Jewish settlements were destroyed and converts were banished to Siberia and the Caucasus. Goncharova's first true exposure to Jews did not occur until 1903 when she accompanied Larionov to the Ukraine. It was during this trip that she became fascinated with Jews. According to Chamot, it was the exotic nature of the South, and particularly "the colourful inhabitants," the Jews in their "oriental costumes," that struck her.[8]

Chamot's conclusion does not provide a satisfactory explanation because it does not take into account the importance that Goncharova placed on her choice of subject matter. Moreover, hers are not paintings of colourful inhabitants Chamot speaks of. The figures in her Jewish paintings do not wear oriental costumes, but rather contemporary clothing, as seen in *The Jewish Family* and *The Jewish Shop*, both 1912 (Figs 183–184). Unlike the lush environment seen in Goncharova's peasant pictures, like *Washing Linen*, the surroundings of the Jewish works feature sombre colours, suggesting the darkness of life in the Pale of Settlement and

[8]Chamot, *Goncharova Stage Designs and Paintings* (London, 1979), p. 7.

creating a melancholic mood (Fig. 127).[9]

Goncharova would also have been exposed to the debates on the Jewish question raised in the contemporary press.[10] To combat the perceived threat of the Jews, the Imperial government and the Orthodoxy imposed severe restrictions upon this ethnic group.[11] Jews' right of residence was restricted to the Pale, which resulted in overcrowded, impoverished ghettos. Their mobility was restricted and this modified according to the whim of the autocracy, who in the nineteenth century also hoped to acculturate them through long periods of conscription.[12]

Jews were seen as representative of the evils of Westernization, capitalism and industrialization and blamed for most of the ills of contemporary society. In a letter to the Tsar in 1817, Prince Adam Czartoryski commented that "the Jews are a chief cause of the wretchedness [in Russia]."[13] They were seen as a threat to Russianness,

---

[9]The area of the Russian Empire in which Jews were permitted to reside permanently was known as the Pale of Settlement, which included Bessarabia, Vilnia, Volyn, Grodno, Ekaterinoslav, Kovno, Minsk, Mogilev, Podolsk, Poltava, Tavrida, Kherson, Chernigov and Kiev. In 1880, for example, 300,000 Jews (six per cent of the total Jewish population) lived outside of the Pale, with the majority in violation of the residence laws.

[10]Beginning in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the Jewish question received much press attention. See for examples of these discussions the newspapers: *Novoe vremia*, *Rech*, *Russkiia vedmosti* and *Russkoe slovo*; and the journals: *Evreiskaia zhizn*, *Russkaia mysl*, *Ruskii trud*, *Russkii vestnik* and *Russkoe delo*.

[11]At certain times the Autocracy actually relaxed some of the sanctions against the Jews. For example, following the 1905, revolution many of the restrictions were lifted, but only for a short period of time. By 1909 they were again revoked. Then in 1911 the government, aided by the press, used the Belis trial as a means of inciting violence against the Jews. They then used the ensuing unrest as an excuse to rescind many of the Jews' rights, including those that allowed Jews to carry passports and to live outside of the Pale.

[12]These laws required that the Jewish community supply forty per cent more conscripts than the Christian community. These men were required to serve 25–31 year terms, which were to begin at the age of 16, and they were taken from their homes as early as age seven in order be educated (i.e., acculturated) according to Christian standards.

[13]Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, *The Tsars and the Jews: Reform, Reaction and Antisemitism in Imperial Russia, 1772–1917* (Chur, Switzerland, 1993), p. 33.

and this was cited as one of the "official" reasons why Jews could never be permitted to own land. Russians did not believe that Jews should lord over Christians, especially Orthodox Russians, even if that Christian was merely a peasant.[14] It was feared that this privilege would make it possible for Jews eventually to take over the country.

Capture is a common theme in Russian popular literature, and the preoccupation with captivity and enslavement by non-believers can be attributed to a greater fear of helplessness and separation from mother Russia.[15] The Jews represented the most dangerous type of foreigner to the Russians: the non-western variety. Westerners were seen in popular literature as "haughty but foolish," but the eastern foreigners were thought to be "ferocious but primitive."[16] The Jews' financial success was also perceived as a great threat.

The Tsarist regime even attempted to make Jews scapegoats for Russia's humiliating defeat in the Russo-Japanese war and it spread rumours that they had provided the Japanese with financial aid.[17] Shortly thereafter right-wing radicals claimed that the 1905 Revolution was a direct result of industrialization for which the Jews were responsible.[18]

Goncharova's standing as member of the *intelligentsia*, which contained a number of Jewish intellectuals, furthered her awareness of and

---

[14]Officials cited a number of reasons for this including the protection of the Jews. In a letter to the Parisian Banker Noetzlin, Finance Minister Kokovtsev states that permitting Jewish ownership of land would put Jews at risk because it would "...set the mass of the peasant population against them..." Perepiska V.N. Kokovtseva s Netslinom, in *Krasnyi Arkhiv* 4, 1923. See Löwe, *The Tsars and the Jews*, p. 251; see also pp. 64–65.

[15]Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read*, p. 224.

[16]Ibid., p. 232.

[17]Löwe, *The Tsars and the Jews*, p. 159.

contact with the Jews, including the artist Natan Altman, collector and patron Nadezhda Dobychina and poet Benedikt Livshits. Many of the non-Jewish members of the avant-garde, including Goncharova, were sympathetic to the plight of Russia's Jews as were liberal circles where pro-Jewish attitudes were also fashionable.

Contemporary vanguard artists formed a close-knit community, exhibiting regularly as well as participating in various societies and debates. Through this it is known that Goncharova and Larionov had direct contact with a number of Jewish artists. From 1912 Marc Chagall exhibited regularly with them.[19] Robert Falk was enrolled at the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture from 1905–1912, which corresponds with Goncharova and Larionov's tenure. In fact, on 20 January 1910 both Falk and Larionov were involved in a protest in which a number of students refused to allow Leonid Pasternak, Konstantin Korovin's temporary stand-in, enter the classroom. This resulted in the expulsion of the seven ringleaders, including Larionov and Falk, from Korovin's portrait-genre class.[20] Falk was also one of the founding members of the Knave of Diamonds in 1910.[21]

Goncharova and Larionov also had direct contact with Jews in

---

[18]See ibid., chapter VIII.

[19]These exhibitions include The World of Art, January–February 1912, St. Petersburg; the Donkey's Tail, 24 March–21 April 1912; Target, 6–20 April 1913, Moscow; *Der Sturm*, 20 September–1 December, 1913, Berlin; 1915, 5 April 1915, Moscow.

[20]RGALI Fond 680, op. 3, ed. kh. 62, *Ekspresnoe zu seledanie prepodavatelei*, 21 January 1910. For details on and reminiscences about this incident, see D. Kogan, *Konstantin Korovin* (Moscow, 1967) and Serov, *Valentin Serov. Perepiska 1884–1911* (Leningrad and Moscow, 1937). For contemporary accounts see Glagol, "K intsidentu v uchilishche zhivopisi vainiia i zodchestva," *Stolichnaia molva*, 12 April 1910, p. 2, and an open letter to *Stolichnaia molva*, 12 April 1910, p. 2.

relation to the financing of the first Donkey's Tail exhibition of 11 March 1912. In a letter to his mother, Le-Dantiu complained that Larionov had been corrupted by the money received from Jewish backers:

> In general it's very ugly commercialism, and proves in all respects Larionov's attitude towards us (He's lucky we are not in Moscow). Bart has had it out with them all and I am more on his side. The ugliness of Larionov's commercialism lies in this: he persuaded us to borrow some money from some Jews for the printing of two-three objects by each participant in the Donkey's Tail exhibition, and for this Jews could participate in the exhibition. As a result, we could print less than half that number (five of his, five of his wife's, and five for the rest) and the rest of the money he pocketed, having taken us somehow as guarantors (but without a loan of course). Obviously, such an attitude is unacceptable and pure thievery. I still don't know how we should react – we must all meet together – but in any case good relations are no longer possible.[22]

Although the last two sentences of this letter allude to some disagreements amongst the leftist artists at this time, it is important to note that Le-Dantiu specifically choose to attack Larionov's relationship with his Jewish financiers. This shows that the hatred for Jews occasionally found its way into the liberal circles of the avant-garde.

By 1912 Chagall, the lone Jewish contributor to the Donkey's Tail, enjoyed an international reputation as an artist in his own right. Moreover, he only showed one work at this exhibition compared with the 284 entries of his ten fellow contributors. On this count alone Le-Dantiu loses credibility with regard to his complaint that the organizers had pandered to their Jewish backers and allowed Jews to display works at the exhibition.

---

[21]In addition to Falk, the cofounders included: the Burliuk brothers, Goncharova, Konchalovskii, Kuprin, Lentulov, Larionov and Mashkov.

[22]Le-Dantiu, Letter to his mother, 14 April, 1912. RGALI, fond 792, op. 1, ed. kh. 4.

Further, when the checklist for this show is compared with those of contemporary exhibitions such as the Knave of Diamonds, the World of Art and Target it becomes clear that in all only a handful of Jewish artists participated.[23]

Had Larionov and Goncharova pandered to the dictates of their Jewish backers, or used the Donkey's Tail exhibition as a means of courting Jewish financiers in general, would not Goncharova have displayed works from her Jewish series? The artist had already shown *Jews* at the St. Petersburg Union of Youth exhibition in 1911,[24] and by this time the majority of her works in this series were in various stages of completion.[25] Le-Dantiu's allegations, therefore, seem unfounded.

Goncharova's left-wing political leanings would have also made her more cognizant of the Jewish question. As a result, not only did she make Jews the subject of high art, but she also rejected conventional stereotypical depictions of this group adhered to by Gentiles.[26] This characteristic representation is exemplified by the caricature *Is Explanation Necessary?* published in 1912, where typical Jewish facial features are exaggerated (Fig. 185).[27] Attention is also drawn to the

---

[23]Falk exhibited at the Knave of Diamonds, December–January 1910–11; Altman, Bakst, Chagall and Falk exhibited at the World of Art between 1911 and 1913; and Chagall exhibited at Target in 1913.

[24]Goncharova may have also completed *Jews (primitive)*, 1911; however, as documentary evidence which would serve to clarify this matter is, to the best of my knowledge, unavailable, I am unable to determine whether this is a separate work or simply the Union of Youth canvas displayed under another title. Cf. note 3.

[25]E.g., *Elder with Seven Stars (Apocalypse),* 1911, *Jewish Family*,1912, *Jewess*, 1912, *Jews: Shabbath*, 1912 and *Monk with a Cat*, 1912.

[26]For further discussion see Seth Wolitz, "Experiencing Visibility and Phantom Existence," in *Russian Jewish Artists in a Century of Change, 1890–1990*, p. 14.

[27]*Zemshchina*, 1180, 12 December 1912, front cover. In this caricature the Jew is represented by a spider who sits on a web that is labelled with accusations against the

schematized beard and sidecurls. The caricaturist also adhered to the popular notion of the "Jew as a spider sucking the blood of the flies [the Russian people] it has caught in its web."[28] Instead Goncharova represented Jews sympathetically. Goncharova's concern with Jewish themes is synchronous with her then interest in Eastern and national art. Indeed, the nature of Jewish art had been the subject of much debate since the latter half of the nineteenth century.[29] The renowned art critic Vladimir Stasov saw Jewish art as worthy of its own school.[30] A staunch supporter of indigenous art forms, he encouraged Jewish artists, such as Mark Antokolskii, to develop their own national style. Stasov traced Jewish art back to what he considered to be its Oriental origins and claimed that it preserved Assyrian influences.[31]

In 1905 Stasov and Baron David Ginzburg published *L'Ornement Hébreu*, a folio of pages copied from the St. Petersburg Imperial Library's collection of tenth- and eleventh-century illuminated Hebrew manuscripts found in Cairo.[32] Stasov and Ginzburg argued that there was an

---

Jews, such as white-slave trade, spying, speculation and market control, manipulation of the press, control of the fourth State Duma and an excessive interest in the theatre.

[28]V.V. Rozanov, *Opavshie listia*, 2 vols (St. Petersburg, 1913, 1915), pp. 301–02. See Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, p. 322.

[29]See Olkhovsky, *Vladimir Stasov*; Rajner, "The Awakening of Jewish National Art in Russia;" Gabriel-Apter, *Tradition and Revolution*; Stasov and Gunzberg *L'Ornement Hébreu* (Berlin, 1905); Kampf, "In Quest of the Jewish Style in the Era of the Russian Revolution," *Journal of Jewish Art*, 5, 1978, pp. 48–75. For articles in Russian, see S. An-Sky, "Evreiskoe narodnoe tvorchestvo," *Perezhitoe* (St. Petersburg), 1, 1909; M. Balaban, "Evreiskie istoricheskie pamiatniki v Polshe," *Evreiskaia Starina* (St. Petersburg), 1, 1909; and M. Syrkin, "Doklad o evreiskom iskusstve v Evreiskom Istoriko-etnograficheskom obschestve," *Novyi voskhod* (St. Petersburg), 7, 1911.

[30]This is not to say that Stasov was pro-Semitic or that he supported equality for Jews. He simply believed in the integrity of Jewish art and felt that it needed to be studied and preserved.

[31]Olkhovsky, *Vladimir Stasov and Russian National Culture*, p. 52.

[32]Stasov and Ginzburg, *L'Ornement Hébreu* (Berlin, 1905).

identifiable Jewish style of ornamentation and used the Hebrew manuscripts to illustrate the dominant motifs. Although the authors received much criticism for the folio, it held great significance to those interested in national culture.[33]

Three years later the Jewish Historical and Ethnographical Society was founded in St. Petersburg by Maxim Vinaver. This period also marked the beginning of an active period of publications on Jewish art and culture. Jewish journals such as *The Jewish Almanac*, *Jewish Antiquity*, *The New Dawn* and *Experiences* appeared as early as 1908;[34] and 1909–10 saw the beginning of publication of surveys of ancient Jewish art.[35]

Similar to the Slavophiles' position on native Russian culture, there was also a fear amongst a number of intellectuals that native Jewish culture was in grave danger of dying out. In his reminiscences, Abraham Rechtman recalls that by the "turn-of-the century many Jews had begun to abandon their traditional way of life, replacing age-old customs with totally new lifestyles... much of their culture and history threatened to become lost property."[36] This, according to Rechtman, coincided with the period when Yiddish writers began to develop an interest in Jewish ethnography. Considering Goncharova's position on indigenous art, she would have been sympathetic to this attitude.

---

[33]Kampf, "In Quest of the Jewish Style," p. 51.

[34]*The Jewish Almanac* [*Evreiskii almanakh*], Kiev, 1908; *Jewish Antiquity* [*Evreiskaya starina*)], St. Petersburg, 1909–28; *The New Dawn* [*Novyi voskhod*], 1910–15, St. Petersburg; and *Experiences* [*Perezhito*e], St. Petersburg, 1909–10. See U. Ivask, *Evreiskaia periodicheskaia pechat v Rossii* (Tallinn, 1935).

[35]*Evreiskaya starina* (St. Petersburg, 1909–10); *Perezhito*e (St. Petersburg, 1909–10); and *Novyi vokshod* (St. Petersburg, 1910).

[36]Rechtman, "The Jewish Ethnographical Expedition," *Tracing An-sky. Jewish*

Jewish folk art is characterized by its abstract quality, and this would have also appealed to Goncharova.[37] In 1908 Semyon An-sky (S.A. Rapoport) delivered a seminal lecture that promoted the use of Jewish folk culture in aid of building a secular Jewish identity. An-sky continued to lecture on Jewish material culture and Jewish creativity for the decade that followed. From 1911–14, An-sky led Rechtman, among others, on an ethnographical expedition to the Ukraine in which a collection of over 2000 photographs; approximately 1800 folk tales, legends and parables; 1500 plus folk songs; 500 cylinder recordings of folk songs and motifs; and a number of related anthropological, historical and religious material was assembled.[38] Although the material culture resulting from this expedition was collected after Goncharova painted these works, the fact that it was in the planning stages at this point must be stressed as it surely suggests a climate in which there was an active interest in Jewish art and culture. It is within this intellectual atmosphere that Goncharova's choice of Jewish themes for anti-establishment statements becomes more comprehensible.

6.3 Pictorial analysis

Pro-Tsarist groups, such as the Black Hundreds, were staunchly

---

Collections from the State Ethnographical Museum in St. Petersburg , p. 13.

[37]Kampf, *Chagall to Kitaj: Jewish Experience in Twentieth-Century Art* (London, 1990), p. 25.

[38]Original members of the expedition included: S. Yudovin, painter and photographer; J. Engel, composer; J. Kiselgaf, expert on Jewish folk music; J. Pikangor and S. Shrier, students at the Jewish Academy; and A. Rechtman. For information on the material collected, see Bowlt, "From the Pale of Settlement to the Reconstruction of the World," p. 44.

anti-Semitic and Goncharova had direct knowledge of them and their policies because of their hostility towards students at the Moscow School during the 1905 Revolution.[39] The Imperial government maintained aggressive policies aimed specifically at oppressing the Jews and this took several forms including suppression of their cultural identity and systematic attacks to destroy their heritage. Following the dramatic increase in the number of Jews in Russia after the westward expansion of the Empire during the reign of Catherine the Great, liquidation, acculturation and emigration became the official policy on the Jewish question.

Goncharova visited the Western Ukraine only a few months after a brutal three-day pogrom in the city of Kishinev, in Moldavia, which was instigated by the false rumour of the supposed ritual murder of a young Christian boy by a Jew. Although the authorities had conclusive proof that the murder was committed by a Gentile, contemporary newspapers such as *Bessarabets*, *Znamia* and *Novoe vremia* propagated the fallacy to provoke the public. Following the pogrom, the censors did not allow sympathetic accounts to be published. Indeed, a number of sanctioned reports blamed the Jews for the attacks against them.[40] Goncharova would have also been aware of the pogrom that broke out in Larionov's hometown of Tiraspol

---

[39]In *Protokoly soveta prepodavatelei* (The Protocol of the Council of Teachers), dated 21st October 1905, the Director of the Moscow School expressed his concern over the fact that the government was unable [or perhaps even unwilling] to protect his students from attacks by the Black Hundreds. RGALI, Fond 680, op. 3, ed. kh. 56.

[40]This was also the official response to the Gromel pogrom which occurred 1 September 1903, only two days after a riot between Jews and peasants in the local market. It is not known whether Goncharova was still in the Ukraine at this time.

following a lecture on the Jewish question in 1905.[41]

Undoubtedly Goncharova was affected by the injustice of these situations, which is especially evident in her choice of Moldavian Jews as the subjects of this series of paintings.[42] Goncharova produced melancholic pictures by means of the sober colours used. There is also an overall sense of alienation in these works as, for the most part, the figures are not united by action or sight and they remain separated from the audience, as in *The Jewish Family*, 1912, *The Jewish Shop*, 1912, and *Jews of Various Ages*, *ca.* 1912–13. In *Jews Various Ages*, for example, the two women closest to the forefront of the picture plane have their backs to the viewer; and, although the third female faces forward, she looks down rather than at the viewer (Fig. 186).

Goncharova did not adhere to contemporary stereotypes, but presented a dignified portrayal of this oppressed group (e.g. *The Jewish Family* and *Elder with Seven Stars[Apocalypse]*). Given the Tsarist attitude towards Jews, Goncharova's portrayal of these individuals would have been viewed as provocative and anti-Tsarist, especially coming from a Russian Orthodox woman.

The innovative Neo-primitivist style in which Goncharova painted these works would also have challenged established values. How she

---

[41] *Pravitelstvennii Vestnik*, vol. 24, 10, 1905, p. 2.

[42] In a her reminiscences the Jewish artist S.I. Dymshits-Tolstaia mentions seeing Goncharova's paintings of Moldavian Jews "at this exhibition there were presented the Rayism… of Larionov, Goncharova displayed her series of Moldavian Jews. Malevich came forward with his squares – 'black on black' and 'white on white.' Tatlin…." It is interesting to note that Dymshits-Tolstaya uses the term series when referring to these works. Archives of the State Russian Museum, Fond 100, op. 249, ed. kh. 38. Larionov also exhibited *Sketch of a Moldavian Venus* together with his *Jewish Venus* at the 1913

painted was as provocative as what she painted, and without this particular marriage of unacademic technique and unconventional subject matter, either element would have been rather ineffective on its own. It is therefore by means of both theme and style that she made these statements.

In *Monk with a Cat*, 1912, an elderly man with a long beard stands in an archway cradling a cat in his arms (Fig. 187). A hand in the upper left corner of the canvas points with two extended fingers to this central figure. In the background two men carrying sacks move from right to left, and they are separated from the foreground by an elevated balustrade.

In 1994 Lodder identified the central figure as a Rabbi and the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art changed the name of the painting from *Monk with a Cat* to *Rabbi with a Cat*.[43] But if the figure is in fact a Rabbi, why did Goncharova repeatedly exhibit the work under the title of *Monk with a Cat*?[44] Lodder bases her identification on the figure's costume and his facial hair.[45] The man's coat certainly could be considered typically Jewish, but the garment is rendered too ambiguously for a definitive conclusion. Further, the hat and beard are customary among Orthodox male Jews in general.

Target exhibition held in Moscow.

[43]Lodder, *Russian Painting of the Avant-Garde*, pp. 12–13.

[44]For example, the work was exhibited under the title *Monk with a Cat* at Goncharova's one-woman show, Natalia Goncharova 1900–1913, Moscow (cat. 491); *Monk with a Cat*, Solo exhibition at Dobychina's Gallery, St. Petersburg, April–May 1914 (cat. 4). In his monograph Eganburi also lists the work under this title. Both Eganburi and Chamot's identification of the painting as *Monk with a Cat* indicates that it is safe to postulate that Goncharova referred to the work under this title from 1912. Chamot wrote on Goncharova and Larionov after forming a close friendship with the artists. She based the titles and dates of their works on information given to her by the artists during her visits, and, unlike the dates given to her, she found the artist's information regarding the titles to be reliable.

[45]Interview with author, St. Andrews, May 1995.

Chamot states that the brimmed hat worn by the old man is unusual for a Russian Monk; it is clearly not the *khlobuk* they normally wear.[46] There are two types of traditional *khlobki*, both tight-fitting and brimless (Fig. 188). Although one is taller with a stiffer crown and sometimes has a veil attached, they are both of a similar type and neither resemble the hat worn by Goncharova's "Monk."[47] This is also true of the *khlobki* worn by the Monks depicted in carved wooden figures (Fig. 189).

Goncharova's *The Jewish Family* confirms that the hat is more representative than those favoured by Jews at this time. Yehuda Pen's *Divorce*, *ca.* 1907, provides a number of examples of contemporary Jewish headgear, including two worn by the elderly men on the left which again are similar (Fig. 190).

The facial features of this figure certainly have an ethnic look about them. His skin tone is similar to that of the figures in *Jews: Sabbath*, 1912 (Fig. 191). The figure does not appear to have side curls in his long grey hair. However, contemporary photographs show that not all Jews wore side curls, as Pen's *Divorce* demonstrates.

Goncharova was intentionally vague with the identification of this figure. On the one hand she labelled him as a Monk, but in actual fact she presented the viewer with an image that obviously did not fit this

---

[46]Chamot, *Goncharova Stage Designs and Paintings*, p. 37. Goncharova would have been familiar with a Monk's accoutrements. The artist's native province of Tula was home to the Sheglovo Convent of the Holy Mother of God from 1868 to 1920. The monastery took its name from the icon *Mother of God Nourishing with Milk*, which was housed in the main cathedral. The monastery housed holy relics, a part of the Saviour's Life-giving cross and a piece of stone from the Holy Sepulchre. For further information on this monastery, see Anatolii Feoktistov, ed., *Russkie monastyri* (Moscow, 1995).

[47]The headgear worn by Archbishops and priests is similar to the *khlobki*.

identification. Goncharova, it seems, deliberately set up a situation where the title and the central figure are at odds with one another so that her audience would be forced to look more closely for the meaning behind this painting.[48]

Goncharova again turned to icons for stylistic sources. This is confirmed by Chamot who states that Goncharova wished to emphasize the Jewish paintings in relation to icons and religiosity.[49] She used the heiratic organisation of the Christian icon to depict the figure, employing the archway as a halo.

As seen in icon painting such as *The Fiery Ascension of the Prophet Elijah*, sixteenth century and *John the Baptist in the Wilderness*, late fifteenth to early sixteenth centuries, the hand in the upper right can be identified as that of God pointing to the old man emphasizing that he is one of God's chosen people (Figs 192–193).[50] Goncharova, however, deviated from that of the traditional sources and portrays the hand pointing with the index and pinkie fingers.

This gesture could symbolize the warding off of evil. Goncharova's "peasant-like superstitions" formed an integral part of her

---

[48]In 1913 an illustration of the painting was published in the Western periodical *The Sun of Russia* [*Solntsa Rossii*] as *Old Man. Solntsa Rossii*, 49, 1913. (This information comes to me via Christina Lodder and was confirmed by Jessica Boissel of the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. At the present time the exact source of this illustration is unavailable due to the refurbishment of the Centre.) This is presumably because the Parisian audience would not have understood the conflict between the title *Monk with a Cat* and the image of this Jewish man who clearly does not fit this label. While in Paris Goncharova conveyed the title *Monk with a Cat* to Chamot without explaining the contextual framework, which indicates that it was most likely the editor and not the artist who retitled the work in 1913 for the Western audience.

[49]Chamot, *Goncharova Stage Designs and Paintings*, pp. 5 and 37.

[50]Exodus 33:20 states, "Thou canst not see my face; for no man shall see me and live." Due to this ban, God can be found represented in icon painting by a hand.

character.[51] Alexandra Pregel remembers:

> Sometimes, while talking animatedly in a cafe, she would stop short and begin to whisper:
> 'Don't look to the right, but there is a woman (a stranger to her) over there with the "evil eye"', or she would say 'there's an evil aura around her over there...'
> She would even make a half gesture with her hand to shoo 'them' [the evil spirits] away.[52]

This hand gesture also held similar significance in Jewish folklore. The Islamic *hasma*, the hand used to ward off the evil-eye, entered Jewish art as early as the fourteenth century. The hand in general can also signify a priestly blessing, a motif often found on Jewish tombstones, many of which were located in Moldava (Fig. 194).[53] Along with numerous symbolic images that include the prayer shawl, the six-winged angel, the Hebrew letters, the fish, the bird, the flame, plants and fantastic animals, blessing hands are also part of an iconographical inventory taken from religious practices, folktales and legends.[54]

Goncharova's cat seems related to popular prints.[55] The cat was often used in *lubki*, such as *The Kazan Cat* and *The Mice Buried the Cat*, to symbolize Peter the Great who was exceptionally harsh on the Old Believers who refused to give up their traditional way of life (Figs 78 and

---

[51]Pregel, "Le Fil d'Or," p. 225.
[52]Ibid.
[53]Judith Glatzer Wechleser, "El Lissitzky's 'Interchange Stations': the Letter and the Spirit," *The Jew in the Text: Modernity and the Construction of Identity*, ed. by L. Nochlin and T. Garb (London, 1995), pp. 196–97. D. Goberman, *Jewish Tombstones in Ukraine and Moldova*, from the series *Masterpieces of Jewish Art* (Moscow, 1993), p. 17.
[54]Kampf, *Chagall to Kitaj*, pp. 40–41.
[55]It is interesting to note that Larionov owned at least one *lubok* on Jewish themes. He displayed a print entitled *Jews* (cat. 254) from his personal collection at the icon and *lubki* show that he organized in 1913. This indicates an awareness of this source material. Little is known about this particular print, and, without further documentary evidence it cannot be determined whether this was a Jewish lubok by a Jewish artist or a print in which Gentiles depict Jews.

195).[56] This is similar to the situation faced by the Jews and the cat in Goncharova's painting could therefore also symbolize the Tsarist regime. The old man cradles the cat, which suggests the Jews' dual position. Although Russia was their homeland, they were constantly reminded of their alien status and persecuted for it.[57] Hence the Jew embracing the animal can be read as the attachment he feels for the motherland that seeks to rid itself of him.[58]

The two men in the background of *Monk with a Cat* wear aprons and carry parcels on their backs, oblivious of the central figure. Goncharova abstracted them from the main scene physically as well as psychologically by scaling them down and placing them on an elevated plane. The banister further emphasizes the detachment, heightening the sense of isolation in this painting.

Lodder states that these background figures clearly refer to the emigration of Jews from Russia to escape the pogroms, which seems unlikely because they wear aprons.[59] Why would they wear aprons for their flight? It is perhaps more plausible to assume that these men are

---

[56]*The Kazan Cat* is thought to be a satire of Peter the Great. The whiskers of the cat parody the Tsar's moustache and the inscription mocks his pompous title of Emperor of the Russian Empire. Likewise, *How the Mice Bury the Cat* is a satire of the funeral of Peter the Great. The weak and injured mice, thought to represent the Old Believers who were victims of religious persecution under Peter's orders, are depicted triumphing over their tyrant.

[57]For a concise discussion on this see Michael Stanislawski, "The Jews and Russian Culture and Politics," in *Russian Jewish Artists in a Century of Change, 1890–1990*, p. 16.

[58]It is interesting to note that Goncharova updated the cat. Although Peter the Great was accorded this symbol because his moustache resembled the whiskers of a cat, she portrays the symbol of the current moustached Tsar without this important feature. In doing this she may also have been illustrating his incompetence and his regime which had weakened Russia politically and socially.

[59]Lodder, *Russian Painting of the Avant-Garde*, p. 13.

workers going about their daily business. Their position in the distance behind the central figure may indicate that they ignore the present situation which they condone through inaction.

Jews: Sabbath, 1912, depicts a rural setting with four Jews at rest, presumably, as denoted by the title, at the start of the Sabbath (Fig. 191) The word *shabash* means not only the ceremony of lighting candles but also quitting time. As the roseate sky indicates, the scene takes place at sunset, and the two men seated on a bench and the two women standing behind them are at rest.

The Jewish Sabbath is observed from sunset on Friday to nightfall on Saturday when Jewish law forbids 39 types of labour.[60] Labour in this instance is symbolized by the red rose as it is prohibited to pick and carry flowers on the Sabbath.

The object on the bench in front of the woman dressed in white is likely their food, which indicates that they are not going to celebrate the Sabbath according to Jewish law. The Sabbath meal, the most sumptuous of the week, is an integral part of the worship. It can only be eaten indoors after the lamps are lit and only where they are burning.[61] There is clearly no feast in store for Goncharova's Jews.

It appears that in Goncharova's painting the Jews are not allowed

---

[60]The Friday routine includes buying food, washing and cleaning one's nails for honouring the Sabbath, avoiding long distance travel in the event of delay, lighting a candle 15–18 minutes before sunset (when Sabbath commences) and saying *Berachah*. Eli Pick, *Guide to Sabbath Observance* (London, 1975), pp. 10–11. For a list of the 39 types of labour, see Ibid., pp. 13–40 and Aryen Kaplan, *Subbota den vechnosti* (Jerusalem, 1978), p. 34.

[61]Emil G. Hirsch, "Sabbath," *Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 10 (London, 1925), pp. 590, 595 and 597.

to worship properly. *Jews: Sabbath* is contrary to the sixteenth-century popular print *Preparing Flour, Baking*, which illustrates the preparation of flour and the baking of bread as an act of Christian devotion (Fig. 26).

The adherence to a Kosher diet also separated Jews from Russian society.[62] Rozanov wrote "with each 'bit of kosher food', one could say that the Jew swallows a 'conspiracy' and a 'vow' directed against the Russians…" and it is possible that preventing the Jews from partaking in their Sabbath meals may have been seen as a means of protecting Russians.[63]

This scene may be a comment on the fact that the government made it illegal for Jews to celebrate their own holidays, the purpose of which was to break the solidarity of this close-knit ethnic group. By illustrating the Jews' inability to observe the Sabbath, Goncharova may have been suggesting that they escaped one form of slavery to be placed in another, as the Sabbath is linked to the Exodus and the miraculous delivery from slavery.[64]

The space depicted in the painting is uncomfortable. The four oversized figures are pushed to the forefront of the picture plane, and they are punctuated by the trees on either side of the canvas. The foliage encloses them further. Although the women face the same direction and the men sit next to one another, there is no real unity of the figures in this

---

[62]Samuel P. Oliner and Ken Hallum, "Minority Contempt for Oppressors: A Comparative Analysis of Jews and Gypsies," *California Sociologist*, 1978, p. 47.
[63]Rozanov, *Evropa i evrei* (St. Petersburg, 1914), p. 13. See Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, p. 325.
[64]Chaim Pearl, "Sabbath," *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion* (Oxford, 1997), p. 595.

painting. There is no physical connection nor eye contact made between the figures or with the viewer. This sense of alienation, coupled by the worried look on the figures' faces suggests their predicament. The figures in *Jews: Sabbath* differs markedly from those portrayed by Jewish artists of the same period. The Jews in Pen's works, for example, are uniformly engaged in conversation or some other collective activity (Fig. 190).[65] The sense of alienation is also absent in Chagall's Jewish paintings (Figs 196–197).

The woman with the green kerchief in Goncharova's picture is further separated from the others by means of her pale complexion and pink cheeks. Goncharova consistently defined Jews in this series by their skin tone and physical features, and this aberration leads to a questioning of the ethnicity of this particular figure.[66] Jewish women were particularly vulnerable and, when anti-Semitism escalated during the period between the 1905 Revolution and the outbreak of World War I, in 1908 the *zemstvo* physician Dmitrii Zhbankov published an essay highlighting the sexually violent acts endured by Jewish women:

> Women and girls were attacked regardless of age and condition. Gangs of men raped women in public, not only on the streets but at home before their families' very eyes; women's breasts and nipples were sliced off, their bellies ripped open and stuffed with garbage; foetuses were torn from pregnant women.[67]

---

[65]See, for example, *An Old Dressmaker*, early 1910s; *Reading a Newspaper*, 1910s; *The Last Sabbath*, 1910–20; and *Divorce*, *ca.* 1907.

[66]It must be stressed here that although Goncharova identified Jews in this manner, she did not present stereotypical likenesses similar to those found in works such as *Is an Explanation Necessary?*

[67]Zhbankov, "Polovaia vakkhanaliia i polovye nasiliia: Pir vo vremia chumy," parts 1–3, *Prakticheskii vrach*, 17–19, 1908, pp. 308–10, 321–21 and 340–42. The following year Zhbankov republished this essay for a more general audience in "Polovaia prestupnost,"

By presenting this light-skinned figure, Goncharova was possibly commenting on the sexual violence directed at Jewish women and the race mixing resulting from Russian men raping them.

The rose held by the woman on the right is a symbol of the Virgin Mary.[68] Coupled with the figure's white dress, the usual symbol of purity, it reminds the viewer of the Jewish ethnicity of the Virgin and her difficult life. Goncharova's combination of the rose and white dress highlights the innocence of these victims, and this can be directly translated to the situation faced by the Jews in Russia. By reminding the viewer of the ethnic background of the Virgin and her Son the red rose indicts the Russians for their actions against Jews. *Shabash* in Russian has one further translation: enough! no more! As a message for Jews to get out, this declaration echoes the prevailing sentiment in pre-Revolutionary Russia.

The black animal in the background of the painting can be read as either a dog or a wolf. If a dog, traditionally a symbol of fidelity, it may be seen as protector, in this case watching over its flock.[69] The dog may also relate to *kalev*, which translates to dog or madman, a term that Jews frequently used to describe Gentiles.[70] If a wolf, in *lubok* literature the grey wolf frequently saves the hero. A black wolf, however, performs no such function. Therefore, this could be the symbol of evil, hence a

---

Sovremennyi mir, 7, sect. 2, 1909, pp. 54–91. See Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, p. 267.

[68]Roses with broken stems symbolize one who is doomed, and are found on Jewish tombstones. Goberman, *Jewish Tombstones in Ukraine and Moldova*, p. 19.

[69]In Dominican paintings, the dog may be seen as driving away wolves (heretics) that are attacking sheep (the faithful).

reference to pogroms or perhaps even to the notoriously anti-Semitic Black Hundreds group.

Goncharova may have also played with the term "wolf's passport," a term explained by Livshits in *The One and a Half-Eyed Archer*:

> ... I had to find a vacancy in one of the infantry regiments – which, generally speaking, was a simple matter for everyone except Jews. Military units regarded Jews, and especially those armed with a university diploma, as bug-bears, carriers of the revolutionary infection and who, for reasons of elementary caution, were not allowed near the barracks. Apart from that, a university diploma in the hands of a Jew was an insult to the government regime, a symbol of the code of laws, over the turnpike to the Pale of Settlement; and provided the particular obstinancy and the insistence of the document's owner. The diploma turned into a "wolf's passport."[71]

The still life beside the man on the right likely consists of fruit. Traditionally, this is used to signify the transience of life and the inevitability of death. In this painting, the still life could be seen as a reminder that the Jews' life of suffering will only end with their genocide.[72]

In Goncharova's *Jewish Family*, 1912, a seated woman comforts a young child while a slightly older child looks on (Fig. 183). A second woman stands to her left and focuses her attention on the man next to her.

---

[70]Oliner and Hallum, "Contempt for Oppressors," p. 49.

[71]Livshits, *The One and a Half-Eyed Archer*, p. 97.

[72]Goncharova also may have used this genre as a means of critiquing the nature of high art. In her still life *In the Studio*, 1907–08, she included one of Larionov's *Provincial Coquette* with an icon and a classical nude to indicate the importance of his contribution (Fig. 198). Not only did Goncharova group the modernist painting alongside these conventional objects of high culture, she placed it in the corner, a location traditionally reserved for objects of veneration. Larionov's leftist work, then, has supplanted these revered masterpieces. Goncharova was similarly irreverent in her Jewish series. By depicting Jews in her paintings, she elevated the status of this downtrodden group while simultaneously providing statements against the autocratic regime and the prevailing notions pertaining to the Jews.

He watches the seated woman. The left side of the canvas is punctuated by a small tree which frames the window of the building. Both these elements are separated from the figures by a fence that runs diagonally across the picture.

In this work Goncharova highlighted the conflict between old and new lifestyles and offered a critique on the policy of assimilation. This is most obvious in the depiction of the two women. The seated woman is veiled and dressed in a robe, whereas the ensemble of her standing counterpart is of better quality, tailored with a fanciful decorative collar. The costumes of the women cannot be attributed to any specific nationality or sect.[73] In fact, they can only be labelled as types: traditional and modern, respectively.

Once more, Goncharova employed traditional sources to present contrary iconography. For the seated Jewish woman she used the composition known as *Our Lady of Tenderness* as her model (Fig. 18).[74] This prototype of the Madonna became established in Russia during the eleventh century and is noted for the manner in which the Madonna

---

[73]The paucity of information pertaining to Jewish sects in Tsarist Russia, makes it impossible to determine which sect of Jews Goncharova represents in this painting. Contemporary censuses, legal documents, etc. simply grouped all Jews together, with only gender subdivisions noted. The entry for Russia in *The Jewish Encyclopedia* mentions Hassidic Jews and "their opponents" during the reign of Paul I; however, there is no identification of the rival sect or possibly sects of Jews. Earlier, during the reign of Catherine the Great, it appears that Jews were legally separated into three categories: Karaites, Foreign Jews and Polish Jews. It remains unclear whether this classification changed after Catherine's reign .J.G. Lipman and Herman Rosenthal, "Russia," *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 10 (London, 1925), pp. 523 and 548.

[74]She also used this type as a prototype for her stylized *Madonna and Child*, 1910. Gray originally dated this work to 1905–07; however, this, is much too early for the painting as Goncharova did not develop her Neo-primitivist vocabulary to this extent until 1909. A later example of Goncharova's use of this genre is an untitled drawing of the Virgin and Child, 1920–30, where she adhered to the format of the original icon more closely .

tenderly comforts her Child. The gentle stroking of this child's head by Goncharova's figure, her cradling him in her arms and the tilt of her head are taken from this Virgin type. Furthermore, Goncharova's figure wears the traditional Marian blue and red colours, and the children are represented in robes similar to that of the Christ Child.

The door behind the adult male figure is slightly ajar. The woman and the two boys are penned in front of the fence, limiting their movement. On the other hand, the second woman is not confined by the slats of the fence. She stands over it and rests her forearm on it while her hand falls casually to the other side. In Jewish lore the fence alludes to emancipation, and this woman's pose could suggest that she is opening a gate to freedom.[75]

Jewish Family may also be seen as a statement on Jewish enlightenment. Chagall's *Calvary* has been referred to as a manifestation of:

> …much of the tension and conflict which the Enlightenment and the processes behind it brought to the Jewish community. It points to the gap between the generations which the Enlightenment created and which drove artists and intellectuals beyond the Pale.[76]

In spite of the oppressive measures directed against them, Jews attained a much higher rate of literacy than the majority of the population. This worried the aristocracy who sought Imperial legislation to reduce further the rights of the Jews.[77] They feared losing their own power and rank to

---

[75]Kampf, *Chagall to Kitaj*, pp. 12–13.
[76]Ibid., p. 12.
[77]Löwe, *The Tsars and the Jews*, pp. 95–96. The Jews are known as "the people of the

this alien ethnic group, whom they held responsible for the crumbling of the social order of the West.[78] To protect the social fibre of the Russian Empire, the Autocracy encouraged conversions to Christianity by extending rights of residence, travel, education and occupation to converts, who were also expected to declare allegiance to the Tsar and the Russian way of life.[79]

The Orthodox Church supported the use of pogroms as a means of encouraging conversions. The clergy were often involved in these violent attacks, transforming these immoral acts into religious crusades and absolving the *pogromshchiki* of any guilt as they supposedly acted in the name of God. The Imperial government exploited the public's veneration of the clergy by using them to disseminate its anti-Semitic message to the people under the guise of divine education and piety.

In the *Jewish Family* the fence, which physically contains the Jews in the Pale and acts as a barrier to the freedom that the outside world could offer, together with the open door could refer to this freedom offered to Jews through conversion to Christianity. The man and the standing

---

book," which, on one level, refers to the Talmud. However, this also relates to the fact that education is of the utmost importance to the Jews and that they take great pains to educate their own. The government, therefore, may have had the power to exercise control over them physically, but it had no power over their minds. I thank Lilian Zirpolo for pointing this out to me.

[78]"The closely-woven net of international Jewry, unconditional in its solidarity, which today runs both social and state credit and which can draw on vast reserves [i.e. power]..., is concerned that the present situation should be maintained at all costs, whereby the international usurers increase their wealth, the productive classes are destroyed and the old Christian structure of Europe collapses." S.F. Sharapov, "Chem spasti dvorianstvo? Zapiska predstavlennaia v osoboe soveshchanie po dvorianskom voprose... Osoboe prilozhenie k no. 20 gazety," *Russkii Trud*, 1897, p. 4. See Löwe, *The Tsars and the Jews*, p. 108. The Slavophiles envisioned Jews becoming the future upper class in Russia if drastic measures were not taken. See Löwe, *The Tsars and the Jews*, p. 106.

[79]See Golovin, in Löwe, *The Tsars and the Jews*, p. 106.

woman appear to have already adopted the contemporary lifestyle offered by their new freedoms, but the future of the children hangs in the balance of the struggle between the old beliefs and the new privileges. This is similar to the sentiment that Goncharova expressed in her peasant series, which speaks the loss of traditional rural customs in favour of more modern tendencies.

The seated woman in Goncharova's painting, as the updated version of the Jewish Virgin who knew the fate that awaited her Son, seems to recognize the cruel irony of this decision. No matter which path the children follow, they will be persecuted. They will be outcasts either way.[80] Even after their rebirth converts were not afforded the full spectrum of rights available to Russians and were still seen as alien or other. Converts were always thought of as Jewish, and Goncharova illustrated this by means of the ethnic portrayal of the figures. This path may have brought monetary gains and some freedoms not normally granted to practising Jews, but they were viewed by their own people as traitors. The convert, therefore, traded one form of alienation for another. This is the fate that awaits the contemporary *Jewish Family*. In this painting Goncharova alluded to this moral dilemma.

In *The Elder with Seven Stars (Apocalypse)*, 1911, Goncharova presented the viewer with an unusual image of a Christ-like figure standing in the centre of the painting behind a large seven-armed gold candelabrum

[80]In *lubok* literature all nationalities except the Jews are portrayed as benefiting from assimilation. Brooks feels that this is due to the "influence of both popular anti-Semitism and official policy." Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read*, p. 218.

from which bright orange flames emanate and which symbolizes a Jewish menorah (Fig. 199). He is crowned and holds seven stars in his extended right hand while his left arm remains close to his side. The background of the painting is deep blue, and a thick, curved, black line across the top of the painting forms an arch-like setting while angels watch from spandrels.

The source for this painting is the revelation of John.[81]

> ...I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me; and when I turned I saw seven standing lamps of gold, and among the lamps one like a son of man, robed down to his feet, with a golden girdle round his breast. The hair of his head was white as snow-white wool, and his eyes flamed like fire; his feet gleamed like burnished brass refined in a furnace and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and his face shone like the sun in full strength. (Revelation 1:12–16)

Goncharova altered some of the elements from the biblical passage no doubt to highlight Christ's ethnicity. His hair is rendered in black, not white. His face does not shine, but is now darkened and Goncharova emphasizes his features with a strong black outline. Unlike her characteristic depictions of saints, such as *The Evangelists*, 1910–11, and *The Virgin and Child*, 1910, stemming from the icon tradition, the Christ is abbreviated, not elongated (Figs 120a–120d and 200). His hands and fingers are not delicate and tapered, but oversized. Although stylized, his

---

[81]This work has been dated by Chamot and Pospelov to 1911; however, I have been unable to place this work under the title *The Elder with Seven Stars (Apocalypse)* in any exhibitions until her one-woman show in April 1914 (cat. 249). As the titles of Goncharova's works were known to vary from exhibition to exhibition, it is probable that she included this work in her one-woman show of August 1913 under the title *The Elder* (cat. 375). Moreover, Goncharova uses two different words for elder in the catalogues – *Starets* (1914) and *Buzuna* (1913). To confuse matters further, Chamot calls the work *Ancient of Days*. Chamot, *Gontcharova* (Paris, 1972), p. 41 and *Goncharova Stage Designs and Paintings*, p. 45. Pospelov, *Bubnovyi valet*, illus. 30.

nose is more pronounced than in Goncharova's other portrayals (e.g., *Christ in Majesty*, 1910–11) (Fig. 201). His dark flesh is accentuated by his now white robe, which also indicates that he is the Lamb of God. Although Goncharova occasionally depicted Christ, *The Elder with Seven Stars (Apocalypse)* is the only representation where she placed a crown on his head. Goncharova identified Christ as a Jew by emphasising his Jewish features, and this crown identifies him as both the King of humanity and the King of the Jews. By highlighting Christ's ethnic background, Goncharova depicted him in a manner considered inappropriate.

At the Moscow School Goncharova originally trained as a sculptor which would have provided her with the technical understanding and visual vocabulary necessary to follow the increasingly popular practice of depicting primitive sculptural forms in her painting.[82] This training is evident in the handling of the Christ figure where she combined dynamic primitive brushwork with heavy sculptural form, resulting in a solid powerful image that provides a dominant central focus.

Already in the nineteenth century, the Jewish sculptor Antokolskii had emphasized in his works the Jewish nature of Christ, and this was readily identifiable by both Christians and Jews. In *Ecce Homo*, 1873, for example, he stressed Jesus' ethnicity by rendering him with side curls and a pronounced nose, as well as a contemporary Jewish robe and a traditional skullcap (Fig. 202).[83] Anatokolskii is a likely precedent for Goncharova's

---

[82]Goncharova enrolled in sculpture classes at the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in 1898. In 1901 she graduated from the course with a silver medal.

[83]Anotkolskii's letters indicate that the artist undertook research into historical dress

sculptural Elder figure. Antokolskii was the most prominent sculptor of his day and in 1905 he was the subject of two publications and a major Moscow exhibition.[84] It is highly unlikely that Goncharova would not have known of his work.

Not all of Goncharova's peers were willing to follow Anatokolskii's lead. In *The Elder with Seven Stars (Apocalypse)* Christ's ethnic background is more readily apparent than in a number of contemporary works. Both Goncharova's choice and her depiction of this theme indicate that she was not afraid of using painting as a form of social protest. In these works, her use of Jewish subject matter and her mature Neo-primitivist style satisfied the criteria for both social and artistic protest.

When her works are compared with the paintings of Marc Chagall, for instance, her radical approach becomes evident. In *Circumcision*, 1909, Chagall's image is not immediately identifiable as a Jewish scene (Fig. 196). Here the imagery of the Madonna holding the Child is taken from the Christian icon tradition, yet, upon closer inspection, one notices the presence of the *mohel* reading the traditional ceremonial prayers, indicating Christ's Jewishness.[85] The majority of Christians would not have recognized this; his Gentile audience would have known that this is a Jewish scene only through the title. The disjunctions in Goncharova's

---

before undertaking his works. See Z. Amishai-Maisels, "The Jewish Jesus," *Journal of Jewish Art*, 9, 1982, pp. 94–95 and notes 38–42.

[84]Stasov, ed., *M.M. Antokolskii. Ego zhizn, tvoreniia, pisma i stati* (St. Petersburg, 1905); and A.D Alferov, *M.M. Antokolskii* (Moscow, 1905). The information on the exhibition came to me via Christina Lodder.

[85]Amishai-Maisels, "Chagall's Jewish In-Jokes," *Journal of Jewish Art*, 5, 1978, pp.

works are much more obvious.

In *The Holy Family*, 1910, Chagall again turned to icon painting and added a subtle element of Judaism (Fig. 197). He seemingly presented a standard Christian image of the Christ child on his mother's lap, but the Child is bearded. This alludes to his ethnic background as here Chagall was referring to a Yiddish saying that every Jewish child is born old.[86] Again, this imagery has significant meaning to Jews but not Christians.[87] In this instance the painting's title does not serve to clarify the ethnic origin of the figures portrayed, and this is similar to Goncharova's *Monk with a Cat*.

When painting religious themes, Goncharova normally looked to traditional Orthodox Christian sources such as icons and *lubki* (e.g. *The Madonna and Child*, *St. George*, *The Evangelists*). In *The Elder with Seven Stars (Apocalypse)*, however, she blended conventions of icon painting with the menorah, and she freely combined imagery from both the Old and the New Testaments resulting in a Christian painting with Old Testament imagery.

Goncharova's identification of Christ as a Jew and the emphasis on his ethnicity point to the importance of these factors to the overall meaning of the painting. By mixing Jewish and Christian images in this painting for the sake of the narrative she highlighted the division of the two

---

78–79.

[86]Ibid., p. 80.

[87]Chagall combined Jewish imagery with Christian sources to highlight the interplay of the two cultures. He felt trapped between the Jewish world in which he was raised and the alien cultures of St. Petersburg and Paris where he spent the majority of his artistic life.

necessarily inter-related religions (and, therefore, between the respective nationalities) while challenging the conventional system of Christian attitudes and meanings.

The arch and spandrels in this work indicate that it is an illustration representing or perhaps even intended for the decorative apse of a church. Seven white roundels are attached to the underside of the archway.[88] These could represent the seven seals mentioned in Revelation. They are analogous to an abstracted version of the scrolls found in her *Evangelist* panels of 1911 (Figs 120 a–d).

Jews were forbidden by law to enter Orthodox Russia. By situating a Jew in the most sacred of Christian settings and referring to Jewish customs and themes, Goncharova seems to have called attention to the culpability of the Orthodox Church which forces non-Christian treatment (e.g. pogroms, economic sanctions, quotas and censorship) of an entire ethnic group based solely on the grounds of their religious beliefs.

The outcast Christ is the embodiment of the kenotic doctrine of salvation through suffering and non-resistance to evil in Russian Orthodox Christianity.[89] This idea can also be related to Jews who, through a self-conscious separation, lived a life that was removed from the rest of society

---

[88]A motif similar to the roundels is found in Goncharova's contemporary work *The Madonna and Child*, which is a direct translation of the icon tradition, for example seen in, *The Virgin Hodegetria* and *The Virgin of the Sign*, both sixteenth century, into modernist painting (Fig. 203). She may have used this design to indicate the heavenly nature of the setting. The saturated blue background also suggests a divine setting found in both Jewish and Christian art. Known as *rakia,* meaning sky or firmament, the ceilings of old synagogues are traditionally painted blue. Abraham Rechtman, "The Interiors of Old Synagogues," *Tracing An-sky. Jewish Collections from the State Ethnographical Museum in St. Petersburg* (Amsterdam, 1992), p. 99. This sort of background is also common to metal icons, which are often finished in blue enamel.

[89]Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read*, p. 175.

and marked by self-inflicted suffering and deprivation.

The elongated oval behind the Elder is similar to an ornamental configuration found on Jewish grave markers (Fig. 204). The Jewish community revered their tombstones as sacred relics and there was little change to traditional motifs from one generation to the next. In the late nineteenth century Jewish cemeteries began to receive scholarly attention, and by the early twentieth century these artefacts came to be considered works of art in their own right.[90] They were also recorded during the An-sky expedition.[91] A similar motif can also be found on *lubki* depicting Christian themes, such as *The Resurrection (Christ in Limbo)*, 1820s or 1830s, and icon painting, such as *The Ascension*, early seventeenth century (Figs 205–206).

It is perhaps significant that these possible sources all deal with death. The theme of the apocalypse has strong roots in Judaism dating as far back as the second century B.C. In fact much of the imagery found in the New Testament version was borrowed from the book of Daniel.[92] Written during the period of the King of Jyvia's (Antioches Epiphanes) intense persecution of the Jews in hopes of eliminating Judaism, the book

---

[90]Goberman, *Jewish Tombstones in Ukraine and Moldova*, p. 7.

[91]El Lissitzky and Solomon Yudovin recorded sketches of synagogue ornaments and tombstones were made available to artists in the visual arts section of the Jewish National Museum. Natan Altman sketched tombstone reliefs in Volhynia that later inspired Cubist works.

[92]"I kept looking then thrones were set in place and one Ancient in Years took his seat, his robe was white as snow and the hair on his head like the cleanest wool. Flames of fire were his throne and its wheels blazing fire; a flowing river of fire streamed out before him and myriads upon myraids attended his presence. The court sat, and the books opened. [After the beast was destroyed]...I saw one like man coming with the clouds of heaven; he approached the Ancient in Years and was presented to him. Sovereignty and glory and kingly power were given to him, so that all people and nations of every language should serve him." Daniel 7:9–14.

of Daniel was intended to remind the Jews of the vindication of the righteous. Its message is that no matter how difficult circumstances may seem, God will always protect those who put their faith (and fate) in his hands. Similarly, John encourages Christians to keep faith in the face of trial and persecution.[93]

The two angels that accompany Christ can also be found in Daniel who repeatedly identifies an angel as protector of the Israelites.[94] Similarly, John refers to martyrs "awaiting their vindication," after having been given a white robe by an angel.[95] Goncharova may have included the angels as references to the both Old Testament and New Testament sources.

Hugh McLean points out that, "The very structure of the Christian Bible symbolized a profound ambivalence: a book split asunder, in which the heroes of volume one become the villains of volume two."[96] Goncharova's use of both Testaments highlighted the interrelation between the two books. By looking to Daniel she illustrated the dependence of the New Testament upon the Old and, therefore, of Christianity on Judaism, hence, in doing this it is likely that once again she sought to comment on how Russian Christians abuse those who provided the basis for their own

---

[93]Then one of the elders turned to me and said, "These men that are robed in white...These are men who have passed through the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. That is why they stand before the throne of God and minister to them day and night in his temple...They shall never again feel hunger or thirst, the sun shall not beat on them nor any scorching heat, because the Lamb who is at the heart of the throne will be their shepherd and will guide them to the springs of the water of life; and God will wipe all tears from their eyes." Revelation 7:9–17.

[94]Daniel 10:13 and 11:1.

[95]Revelation 6:12–17.

beliefs.

The seven lamps of the Apocalypse, substituted in Goncharova's painting by the menorah, represent the seven churches of Asia Minor, and this tied in with her view of the East as the source of all arts and a source of inspiration.[97]

Goncharova originally exhibited this work under the title *The Elder*, but by 1914 she had began exhibiting the painting as *The Elder with Seven Stars (Apocalypse)*. Goncharova was known to play with the titles of her works which indicates that, like styles of painting, she considered the meaning behind her works to be fluid, "We advance our works and principles to the fore; we ceaselessly change them and put them into practice."[98] In this instance, by changing the title of the work, Goncharova shifted the emphasis of the subject matter from the Jewish question to redemption from the evils of society.

By 1914 Goncharova was interested in apocalyptic imagery and her interest in primitivism was encouraged by the spiritual notion of the primitive. Goncharova executed a number of works on this theme, and she used this apocalyptic imagery as a means of calling for the regeneration of contemporary society and for the "establishment of Christ's kingdom on

---

[96]Hugh McLean, "Theodore the Christian Looks at Abraham the Hebrew: Leskov and the Jews," *California Slavic Studies*, 12, 1973, p. 65.

[97]While kneeling before the "one like a son of man" who was standing among seven golden lamps as he held seven stars in his right hand, John was told to proclaim his vision to the seven Christian communities in Asia Minor. In his *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art* (London, 1974), Hall states that the seven lamps stand for the seven churches of Asia Minor, p. 57. Chamot also mentions this, which indicates that Goncharova was clearly aware of this as Chamot wrote the text in conjunction with the artist. *Goncharova Stage Designs and Paintings*, p. 45.

[98]Goncharova and Larionov, "Rayists and Futurists: A Manifesto." See Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, p. 90.

earth." She returned to this theme in a more pronounced form in the series of 14 lithographs entitled *The Mystical Images of War*, which she began at the outbreak of World War I.[99] This portfolio is perhaps Goncharova's best-known example of this theme, and she combined contemporary motifs, the spirituality and imagery of icon painting and the graphic nature of *lubki* resulting in a haunting depiction of the effects of war (Figs 134a–134d).

As with *The Elder with Seven Stars (Apocalypse)*, Goncharova again used biblical sources for her apocalyptic subject matter; however, she now combined this with contemporary imagery and national emblems. The images produced are a highly personal search for hope during a period characterized by spiritual chaos. In spite of this, the overriding message of *Mystical Images of War* is that of optimism: the Archangel Michael, The Virgin and Child and the angels lead Russia to her spiritual rebirth.

6.4 Conclusion

Goncharova's juxtaposition of Christian and Jewish imagery resulted in works that alluded to the plight of the Jews in Russia and the inhuman nature of the official policy of assimilation. Her concern with Jewish themes was also synchronous with her interest in Eastern and national art and her advocation of the preservation of one's heritage. Indeed, Goncharova proclaimed that her path was towards the East.

This chapter has attempted to situate Goncharova's Jewish

---

[99]Yablonskaia, *Women Artists of Russia's New Age*, p. 54; Pregel, "Le Fil d'Or," p. 225.

paintings in a context that considers the contemporary political and social climate in Pre-Revolutionary Russia. In this series she chose an ethnic group whose oppression and hatred were sanctioned by the state, the church and their respective agents, and she used these paintings to challenge this attitude. By exhibiting paintings on Jewish themes in settings sanctioned by government censors next to works of a Christian character, Goncharova criticised the government's position on Jews, including attitudes against assimilation.

Conclusion

This thesis has addressed the contemporary political and social issues raised by the subject matter of Goncharova and Larionov's Neo-primitivist series of 1907–14. It has aimed to provide a reading of these works through an exploration of the ideological implications of their themes. These paintings were selected from an overall body of work that embodied many themes, and not all of Goncharova and Larionov's paintings fall into the categories discussed. The works studied in this thesis have been interpreted in one way that, along with other readings, can provide a richer understanding of the visual and thematic ideas embodied in them.

The motives that determined Goncharova and Larionov's choice of subject matter have been examined within the broader context of the general cultural and political ambience of the period between the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917. The ideological implications of these themes have been explored. It has been argued that while the artists publicly professed an affinity for indigenous sources and turned to such objects for inspiration, they did so as part of an overall cultural, political and social agenda that challenged the status quo within the Tsarist Empire.

This study has suggested that the artists perceived themselves to be outsiders and that they continually crossed established boundaries as a means of expressing their discontent. Goncharova and Larionov were not members of the social groups that they represented in their series of paintings, and, although they were likely sympathetic to the groups portrayed, the subjects were used to make anti-establishment statements. The artists used these figures, like their religious imagery, primarily to

shock, and that they employed traditional sources to exploit the relations and the disjunctions of prevailing notions.

The first chapter investigated the prevailing ideological climate and provided a cultural and political contextual framework both for the development of Neo-primitivism and for Goncharova and Larionov's choice of subject mater. It was demonstrated that future Neo-primitivist artists were allied with the democratic forces in the 1905 Revolution, and it was suggested that some of their Neo-primitivist canvases raised issues of race, authority and oppression as well as commented upon the difficult social and economic conditions of everyday life. It was also argued that, rejecting the notion of heroes as sanctioned by the government and the Orthodox Church (e.g., royalty, saints, military, political figures, and the like), the artists sought to redefine the hero as the outsider of modern society (e.g., artists, conscripts, gypsies, Jews, peasants and prostitutes), expressed in the primitive style favoured by the artists during this period, and fuelled by their desire to shock and scandalize both their audience and the authorities.

Subsequent chapters focused upon specific thematic cycles that Goncharova and Larionov devoted to hooligan and low-life, prostitute, peasant, soldier and Jewish subject matter within their Neo-primitivist paintings. These chapters maintained that by focusing on these particular themes within their works, the artists challenged established values. In these series Goncharova and Larionov confronted the viewer with images grounded upon various contradictions that called the seemingly disparate subject matter, the means of representation and the symbolism into question.

Larionov and Goncharova's depictions of low-life and hooligan subject matter were anti-social works. These pictures challenged and ultimately undermined the affectations of the civilized behaviour advanced by polite society.

Larionov's prostitute paintings went against the conventional idealized representations of the nude sanctioned by the academic canon. His unorthodox treatment of the female form challenged the viewer's conception of the classical nude, prostitution and sexuality, as well as the role of women within the established Russian patriarchy.

The cycle of paintings that Goncharova devoted to labouring peasants was examined. Changes resulting from industrialization caused rural peasant women to be seen by society as loyal citizens who both guarded traditional customs and ways of life and as the keepers of the moral fibre of the community. It is within this context Goncharova's monumental representations of the daily life of the peasantry, predominantly through labouring women, was examined, and it was suggested that she highlighted the traditional way of rural life as a call for the regeneration of contemporary Russian society.

Larionov's soldier series were divided into two groups: paintings that provide a social commentary on the plight of conscripts; and paintings that make political statements questioning the established Tsarist regime and its agents. The examination of both categories, suggested that Larionov debased traditionally revered sources, such as icons and *lubki*, that would have been immediately identified by his audience, incorporating the cruder stylistic devices to produce coarse paintings that mock the pretensions of the military. It was the soldier as a symbol of

patriotism that he mocked, and by doing so he turned the satire onto the Tsarist regime.

In her Jewish paintings Goncharova chose to represent a group of people whose oppression and hatred was sanctioned by the state and the church. She did this as part of an overall program to overthrow the existing order in art. By exhibiting paintings on Jewish themes in settings sanctioned by government censors next to works of a Christian character, she criticised the government's position on Jews, including attitudes against assimilation.

Goncharova and Larionov set up a series of discourses in which their Neo-primitivist works called into question established formal practices and subject matter. Their focus on pictorial elements such as colour, texture and volume resulted in monoplanar representations, a denial of spatial depth, a use of patterning, and the blending of text and image. Such innovations made their works powerful and formed the basis for later experiments with the dissolution of form.

In their series of paintings devoted to hooligans and low-life, prostitutes, peasants, soldiers and Jews, Goncharova and Larionov allied their new aesthetic with an underlying anti-establishment ethos. This study aimed to demonstrate that the examination of this relationship between subject matter, technique and ideology is crucial for a more complete understanding of Goncharova and Larionov's Neo-primitivist series of 1907–14.

Although scholars like Elena Basner, Anthony Parton and Jane Sharp have alluded to the anti-establishment nature of Goncharova and Larionov's paintings, this study is the first to explore fully this ethos

through an examination of the contemporary issues raised by the artists' Neo-primitivist thematic series of 1907–14.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary

A. Archives:

Central State Archive of Literature and Art [RGALI], Moscow
Fonds consulted: 216, 336, 522, 631, 664, 680, 740, 769, 792, 1334, 1497, 1511, 1929, 1956, 2094, 2310, 2328, 2554, 2577, 2656, 2694 and 2951.

Lenin Public Library, Moscow
Fonds consulted: 218, 259, 386, 420, 421, Mus LVII, NS II, Shemm II, Shemm III, Shemm, V, and Shemm VI.

Russian Museum, St. Petersburg
Fonds consulted: 70, 97, 100, 115, 117, 121, 128, 133, 135, 137, 138, 142, 144, 147, 149, 151, 169, 195, 198, 201, 209, 212 and 213.

Saltykov-Shchedrin Library, St. Petersburg
Fonds consulted: 124, 207, 552.

Tretiakov Gallery, Moscow
Fonds consulted: 3, 4, 8, 17, 25, 31, 48, 54, 88 and 103.

B. Periodicals and Journals:

Moscow: *Golos moskvy*, *Moskovskii listok*, *Ranee utro, Russkoe slovo*, *Russkie vedmosti*, *Stolichnaia molva*, *Vesy* and *Zolotoe runo*.

St. Petersburg: *Apollon*, *Mir iskusstvo*, *Petersburgskii listok*, *Protiv techeniia*, *Rech*, *Russkoi mysli*, *Russkie vedmosti*, *Severnye zapiski* and *Stary gody*.

Kiev: *Iskusstvo i pechatnoe delo*, *Kievlyanin* and *V mire iskusstv*.

C. Press reviews and texts by artists and/or critics:

Alekseev, D., "Larionovshchina," *Golos moskvy*, 18 September 1913, p. 4.

Arlekin, "Malenkii feleton. 'Bubnovyi valet.' (Razskaz ochevidtsa)," *Moskovskaia gaztea-kopeika*, 12 December 1910.

Ashevskii, P. "Bubnovoe delo," *Russkoe slovo*, 287, 12 December 1910, p. 6.

B.P. [B.P. Loaptim-Shuishkii], "Sezon III. M. F. Larionov," *Protiv techeniia*, 17 December 1911, p. 3.

Benois, A., "Chen mogla by byt akademiia khudozhestv," *Rech*, 6 January 1912, p. 3.

------, "Dnevnik khudozhnika," *Rech*, 21 October 1913, no. 288, p. 4.

------, "Khudozhestvenny pisma: Dva slova o skulpture," *Rech*, 18 February 1911, p. 3.

------, "Khudozhestvenny pisma: Ikony i novoe iskusstvo," *Rech*, 5 April 1913, p. 2.

------, "Khudozhestvenny pisma: Povorot k lubku," *Rech*, 18 March 1909, p. 2.

------, "Kubizm ili kukishizm," *Rech*, 23 November 1912, p. 2.

------, "Moskovskaia khronika," *Rech*, 11 January 1911, p. 3.

------, "Vystavka 'Soiuza Molodezhi,'" *Rech*, 19 December 1912.

"Beseda s N.S. Goncharovoi," *Stolichnaia molva*, 5 April 1910, p. 3.

"Bubnovaia dama pod sudom," *Protiv techeniia*, 4 January 1911, p. 4.

Burliuk, D., "Cubism (Surface – Plane)," from *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste* (Moscow, 1912). An English version is printed in John E. Bowlt, ed. and trans., *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism 1902–1934* (London, 1988), pp. 69–76.

-------, *Galdiashchie "Benua" i novoe Russkoe natsionalnoe iskusstvo* (St. Petersburg, 1913).

Burliuk, V., "The Savages of Russia" *Der Blau Reiter Almanac*, ed. by V. Kandinsky and F. Marc (London, 1974).

Cherri, "Ssora 'khvostov' s 'valetami,'" *Golos moskvy*, 11 December 1911, p. 5.

Chuzhoi, "Moskovskie otliki, oslinyi khvost," *Rech*, 13 March 1912, p. 2.

Denis, M., "Ot Gogena i van Goga k klassitsizmu," *Zolotoe runo*, 5, May, 1909, pp. 63–68 and 6, June, 1909.

Eganburi, E. [I. Zdanevich], *Natalia Goncharova Mikhail Larionov* (Moscow, 1913).

Essem, "Vystavki i khudozhestvennyia dela. 'Mir iskusstvo,'" *Apollon*, 2, February, 1913, pp. 55–58.

F.M., "Vystavka kartin Natalii Goncharovoi," *Moskovskaia gazeta*, 30 September 1913, p. 6.

Garin, S., "Bubnovyi valet," *Utro Rossii*, 12 December 1910.

Glagol, S., "Bubnovyi valet," *Stolichnaia molva*, 13 December 1911, p. 5.

------, "K intsidentu v uchilishche zhivopisi vainiia i zodchestva," *Stolichnaia molva*, 12 April 1910, p. 2.

------, "Moi dnevnik: Kartinnyia vystavki 'Zolote runo'," *Stolichnaia molva*, 2 February 1909, pp. 1–2.

------, "Moi dnevnik: Kartinnyia vystavki (Shkola zhivopisi stroganovskoe uchilishche)," *Stolichnaia molva*, 2 February 1909, pp. 1–2.

------, "Vystavka kartin Natalii Goncharovoi," *Stolichnaia molva*, 30 September 1913, p. 5.

------, "Vystavka na Moskovskoe uchilishche," *Stolichnaia molva*, 11 January 1910, p. 2.

Goncharova, N., *Cubism,* 1912. An English version of this speech is printed in J.E. Bowlt, ed. and trans., *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism 1902–1934* (London, 1988), pp. 77–78.

----------, "Induskii i persidskii lubok. Predislovie Natalii Goncharovoi," *Ikonopisnye podlinniki i lubki organizovannaia M.F. Larionovym* (Moscow, 1913). An English version of this text is printed in J.A. Sharp, "Primitivism, 'Neoprimitivism' and the Art of Natalia Goncharova, 1907–1914." (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1992), pp. 430–31.

----------, "Pismo N. Goncharovoi," *Protiv techeniia*, 3 March 1912.

----------, "Predislovie," *Vystavka kartin Natalii Sergeevny Goncharovoi 1900–1913* (Moscow, 1913). An English version is printed in John E. Bowlt, ed. and trans., *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism 1902–1934* (London, 1988), pp. 54–59.

----------, "Tvorchestvo kredo," RGALI, Fond 740, op. 1 and 2. An English version of this text is printed in J.A. Sharp, "Primitivism, 'Neoprimitivism' and the Art of Natalia Goncharova, 1907–1914." (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1992), pp. 432–34.

Grabar, I., "Moskovskie vystavki II: 'Zolotoe runo,' 'tovarishchestvo,' 'peredvizhniki,'" *Vesy*, 1909, 2, pp. 103–10.

"Khudozhestvennaia zhizn: Venery M. Larionova," *Stolichnaia molva*, 29 October 1912, p. 5.

Korsh, E., "Vystavka N.S. Goncharovoi," *Golos moskvy*, 1 October 1913, p. 6.

Kuprin, A., "Preobrazovanie Moskovskogo uchilishcha zh. v. i z. v akademio," *Zolotoe runo*, 12, December, 1909, pp. 93–94.

Larionov, M., "Gazetnye kritiki v roli politisii nravov," *Zolotoe runo*, 11–12, November–December, 1909, pp. 97–98.

--------, "Le Rayonnisme Pictural," *Montjoie!*, 4/5/6, April/May/June 1914, p. 15. An English version of this text is printed in J.E. Bowlt, ed. and trans., *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism 1902–1934* (London, 1988), pp. 100–01.

--------, "Luchistskaia zhivopis," *Oslinyi khvost i mishen* (Moscow, 1913), pp. 83–124. An English version of this text is printed in J.E. Bowlt, ed. and trans., *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism 1902–1934* (London, 1988), pp. 91–100.

--------, "Predislovie," *Vystavka ikonopisnykh podlinnikov i lubkov, organizovannia M.F. Larionovym* (Moscow, 1913), pp. 5–10.

--------, "Predislovie," *Vystavka kartin gruppy khudozhnikov "Mishen"* (Moscow, 1913), pp. 5–7.

--------, "Predislovie," *No. 4: Vystavka kartin futuristy, luchisty, primitiv* (Moscow, 1914).

-------- and Natalia Goncharova, "Luchisty i budushchniki: Manifest," *Oslinyi khvost i mishen* (Moscow, 1913), pp. 9–48. An English version of this text is printed in J.E.. Bowlt, ed. and trans., *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism 1902–1934* (London, 1988), pp. 87–91.

Livshits, B., *The One and a Half-Eyed Archer*, trans. by J.E. Bowlt (Newtonville, MA, 1977).

Lopatin-Shuiskii, B.P., "Moskva: khudozhestvennyi disput," *Protiv techeniia*, 22, 18 February 1912, p. 3.

M.L. [Mikhail Larionov], "Gaznetnye kritiki v roli politist nravov," *Zolotoe runo*, 11/12, November/December 1909, pp. 97–98.

Makovskii, Sergei, "Khudozhestvennye itogi," *Apollon*, 7, September, 1909, pp. 21–22.

---------, "Novoe iskusstvo i 'chetvertoe izmerenie' (po povodu sbornika 'Soyuza molodezhi')" *Apollon*, 7, September, 1913, pp. 53–60.

---------, "Vystavka mir iskusstva," *Apollon*, 2, February, 1911, pp. 14–24.

---------, "Vystavka novago obshchestva," *Apollon*, 1, January, 1911, pp. 38–48.

Mamontov, S., "Bubnovyi valet," *Russkoe slovo*, 12 December 1910, p. 6.

--------, "Bubnovyi valet," *Russkoe slovo*, 15 December 1910, p. 6.

--------, "Vystavka lubkov, *Russkoe slovo*, 21 February 1913.

"Moskovskaia khronika: delo obshchestva svbodnoi estetiki," *Rech*, 23 December 1910, p. 3.

Mukhortov, F., "Progressivnyi parlich (Vystavka kartin M.F. Larionova)," *Golos moskvy*, 9 December 1911, p. 5.

"Oni ne khoteli skandala (obiasneniia ustroitelei disputa 'Mishen')," *Moskovskaia gazeta*, 23 March 1913, p. 6.

Osliny khvost i mishen (Moscow, 1913).

Parkin, V., "Osliny khvost i mishen," *Osliny khvost i mishen* (Moscow, 1913), pp. 49–82.

"Poslednii krik Parizhskoi mody. Ubezhdennye grimasniki" *Teatr v karrikaturakh*, Moscow, 14, 8 December 1913, p. 14. An English version is printed in J.E. Bowlt, "Mikhail Larionov, A Conjurer of Colored Dust," *Mikhail Larionov*, exh. cat. (Stockholm, 1987).

Punin, N., "Puti sovremennago iskusstva i Russkaia ikonopis," *Apollon*, 10, 1913, pp. 44–50.

R–ii, "Disput 'Bubnovago valeta,'" *Russkiia vedmosti*, 14 February 1912, p. 5.

Rostislavov, A., "Sverkaiushchii talant (vystavka kartin N.S. Goncharovoi)," *Rech*, 23 March 1914, p. 3.

Shevchenko, A., *Neo-primitivizm. ego teoriia. ego vozmozhnosti. ego dostizheniia* (Moscow, 1913). An English version is printed in J.E. Bowlt, ed. and trans., *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism 1902–1934* (London, 1988), pp. 41–54.

----------, *Printsipy kubizma i drugikh sovremennykh techenii v zhivopisi vsekh vremen i narodov* (Moscow, 1913).

Songaillo, V.N., *O vystavke kartin Natalii Goncharovoi* (Moscow, 1913).

Tugendkhold, Ia., "Moskovskie vystavka, *Apollon*, 4, March, 1913, pp. 55–58.

----------, "Vystavka kartin Natalii Goncharovoi," *Apollon*, 8, October, 1913, pp. 71–73.

----------, "Sovremennoe iskusstvo i narodnost," *Severnye zapiski*, November 1913, pp. 153–60.

Voloshin, M., *Liki tvorchestvo* (Leningrad, 1988).

--------, "Oslinyi khvost," *Apollon*, 7, April 1912, pp. 105–06.

Zdanevich, I. and M. Larionov, "Pochemu my raskrashivaemsya: Manifest futuristov," *Argus*, 1913, pp. 114-18. An English version of this text is printed in J.E. Bowlt, ed. and trans., *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism 1902–1934* (London, 1988), pp. 79–83.

D. Exhibition Catalogues:

Objets d'Art Russes Anciens (Paris, 1907).

Stefanos (Moscow, 1907–1908).

Katalog vystavki "Zveno" (Kiev, 1908).

Katalog vystavka kartin – "Salon zolotogo runa" (Moscow, 1908).

Katalog vystavki "Venok" (St. Petersburg, 1908).

Katalog vystavki "Venok stefanos" (St. Petersburg, 1909).

Katalog Zolotoe runo (Moscow,1909).

Katalog Zolotoe runo (Moscow, 1909–1910).

Intematsionalnaia vystavka kartin, skulptumy gravyury i risunkov (Odessa, 1909–1910).

Bubnovyi valet (Moscow, 1910–1911).

Salon 2: Mezhdunarodnaia khudozhestvennaia vystavka (Odessa, 1910–1911).

Odnodnevnaia vystavka proizvednii M.F. Larionova 8 dekabra 1911 g., Obshchestvo svobodnoi estetiki, Moscow. *Vystavka ikonopisnykh podlinnikov i lubkov, organizovannia M.F. Larionovym* (Moscow, 1913).

Vystavka kartin gruppy khudozhnikov "Mishen" (Moscow, 1913).

Vystavka kartin Natalii Sergeevny Goncharovoi 1900–1913 (Moscow, 1913).

Vystavka kartin Natalii Sergeevny Goncharovoi 1900–1913 (St. Petersburg, 1914).

No. 4: Vystavka kartin futuristy, luchisty, primitiv (Moscow, 1914).

General

Ascher, A., *The Revolution of 1905: Russia in Disarray* (Stanford, 1988).

Baron, S. W., *The Russian Jews Under the Tsars and the Soviets* (New York, 1976).

Belinfante, J.C.E. and I. Dubov, eds, *Tracing An-sky: Jewish Collections from the State Ethnographic Museum in St. Petersburg* (Amsterdam, 1992).

Bernstein, L., *Sonia's Daughters: Prostitutes and Their Regulation in Imperial Russia* (Berkeley, 1995).

Betz, M., "The Icon and Russian Modernism," *Artforum*, 15, 1977, pp. 38–45.

Bonnell, V.E., ed., *Roots of Rebellion: Workers' Politics and Organization in St. Petersburg and Moscow, 1900–1914* (Berkeley, 1983).

-------, *The Russian Worker: Life and Labor Under the Tsarist Regime* (Berkeley, 1983).

Bowlt, J.E., "A Brazen Can-Can in the Temple of Art: the Russian Avant-Garde and Popular Culture," *Modern Art and Popular Culture: Readings in High and Low* (New York, 1990).

-----, "Art and Violence: The Russian Caricature in the Early Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Twentieth-Century Studies*, 13/14, 1975, pp. 56–76.

-----, "Cabaret in Russia," *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 19, 1985, pp. 443–65.

-----, "Faces Painted with Fanciful Patterns," *USSR*, 5/6, 1991, pp. 67–88.

-----, ed., *Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*, 5, 1987.

-----, ed., *Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*, 11, 1989.

-----, "Natalia Goncharova and Futurist Theatre," *Art Journal*, 49, 1989, pp. 44–51.

-----, "Neo-Primitivism and Russian Painting," *The Burlington Magazine*, CXVI, 1974, pp. 132–44.

-----, "Nineteenth-Century Russian Caricature," *Art and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Russia*, ed. by T.G. Stavrou (Bloomington, 1983).

-----, ed. and trans., *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism 1902–1934* (London, 1988).

-----, *The Silver Age: Russian Art of the Early Twentieth Century and the "World of Art" Group* (Newtonville, MA, 1982).

-----, "Through the Glass Darkly: Images of Decadence in Early Twentieth-Century Russian Art," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 17, 1982, pp. 93–110.

-----, "Two Russian Maecenases: Savva Mamontov and Princess Tenisheva," *Apollo*, 158, 1973, pp. 444–53.

-----, and N. Misler, *The Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection. Twentieth-Century Russian and East European Painting* (New York, 1993).

Boym, S., *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia* (Cambridge, 1994).

Bradley, J., *Muzhik and Muscovite: Urbanization in Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley, 1985).

-------, "'Once You've Eaten Khitrov Soup You'll Never Leave!': Slum Renovation in Late Imperial Russia," *Russian History/Historie Russe*, 11, 1984, pp. 1–28.

Briusov, V., *Dnevniki 1891–1910* (Moscow, 1927).

Brooks, J., *When Russia Learned to Read: Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861–1917* (Princeton, 1995).

Brower, D., *Training the Nihilists: Education and Radicalism in Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca, 1975).

Brown, M. R., *Gypsies and Other Bohemians: The Myth of the Artist in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ann Arbor, 1985).

Brumfield, W.C., *Artists in Revolution* (Bloomington, 1977).

Brym, R.J., *The Jewish Intelligentsia and Russian Marxism* (London, 1978).

Bushnell, J., *Moscow Graffiti: Language and Subculture* (Boston, 1990).

--------, *Mutiny Amid Repression: Russian Soldiers in the Revolution of 1905* (Bloomington, 1985).

Chamot, M., "The Early Works of Goncharova and Larionov," *Apollo*, XCVII, 1955, pp. 170–74.

------, *Goncharova: Stage Designs and Paintings* (London, 1979).

------, *Gontcharova* (Paris, 1972).

Christian, D., "Tradition and Modern Drinking Cultures on Russia on the Eve of Emancipation," *Australian Slavonic and East European Studies*, 1, 1987, pp. 61–84.

Clark, T.J., *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (London, 1985).

Clayson, H., *Painted Love: Prostitution in French Art of the Impressionist Era* (New Haven, 1991).

Clifford, J., "Histories of the Tribal and the Modern," *Art in America*, 73, 1985, pp. 164–217.

Clowes, E.W., et al., eds, *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia* (Princeton, 1991).

Corbin, A., "Commercial Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century France," *Representations*, 14, 1986, pp. 209–19.

Costlow, J.T., et al., *Sexuality and the Body in Russian Culture* (Stanford, 1993).

Crowe, D.M., *A History of Jews of Eastern Europe and Russia* (London, 1995).

Daulte, M., "Larionov et l'art néo-primitif russe," *L'Oeil*, 1979, pp. 44–51.

Denisov, V., *Voina i lubok* (Petrograd, 1916).

Dmitriev, Iu., *Tsirk v Rossii ot istokov do 1917 goda* (Moscow, 1977).

Dmitrieva, N., *Moskovskoe uchilishche zhivopisi, vaianiia i zodchestva* (Moscow, 1951).

Dubnow, S. M., *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland* (Philadelphia, 1920).

Engel, B.A., "Peasant Morality and Pre-Marital Relations in Late Nineteenth Century Russia," *Journal of Social History*, 24, 1990, pp. 695–714.

-----, "St. Petersburg Prostitutes in the Late Nineteenth Century: A Personal and Social Profile," *The Russian Review*, 48, 1989, pp. 21–44.

-----, "The Woman's Side: Male Out-Migration and the Family Economy in the Kostroma Province," *Slavic Review*, 45, 1986, pp. 257–71.

Engelstein, L., *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Russia* (Ithaca, 1992).

----------, "Morality and the Wooden Spoon: Russian Doctors View Syphilis, Social Class and Sexual Behavior, 1890–1905," *The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth Century*. ed. by C. Gallagher and T. Laqueur (Berkeley, 1987), pp. 169–208.

Farnsworth, B., "The Litigious Daughter-in-Law: Family Relations in Rural Russia in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century," *Slavic Review*, 45, 1986, pp. 49–64.

Farrell, D.E., "Laughter Transformed: The Shift from Medieval to Enlightenment Humour in Russian Popular Prints," *Russia and the World of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by R.P. Bartlett et al. (Columbus, 1988), pp. 157–76.

Fineberg, J., ed., *Discovering Child Art: Essays in Childhood, Primitivism and Modernism* (Princeton, 1998).

Frank S., "'Simple Folk, Savage Customs?' Youth, Sociability and the Dynamics of Culture in Rural Russia, 1856–1914," *Journal of Social History*, 25, 1992, pp. 711–36.

----- and M.D. Steinberg, eds, *Cultures in Flux: Lower-Class Values, Practices and Resistance in Late Imperial Russia* (Princeton, 1994).

Frascina, F. and J. Harris, eds, *Art in Modern Culture* (London, 1992).

Frumkin, J., et al., eds, *Russian Jewry, 1860–1917* (New York, 1966).

Gabriel-Apter, R., et al., *Tradition and Revolution: The Jewish Renaissance in Russian Avant-Garde Art, 1912–1928* (Jerusalem, 1987).

Gans, H.J., *Popular Culture and High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste* (New York, 1974).

Gibian, G. and H.W. Tjalsma, eds, *Russian Modernism: Culture and the Avant-Garde, 1900–1930* (Ithaca, 1976).

Gimbutas, M., *The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe: 7,000 to 3,500 B.C., Myths, Legends and Cult Images* (London, 1996).

Gitelman, Z., *A Century of Ambivalence: The Jews of Soviet Russia and the Soviet Union* (New York, 1988).

Goldwater, R., *Primitivism in Modern Art* (Cambridge, 1986).

Gomberg-Verzhbinskaia, E.P., *Russkoe iskusstvo i revoliutsiia 1905ogo goda* (Leningrad, 1960).

Goodman, S.T., ed., *Russian Jewish Artists in a Century of Change, 1890–1990* (New York, 1995).

Gordin, A.M., *Aleksandr Blok i russkie khudozhniki* (Leningrad, 1986).

------, *Gorod glazami khudozhnikov: Peterburg, Petrograd, Lenningrad v proizvedeniiakh zhivopisi i grafiki* (Leningrad, 1978).

Gray, C., *The Russian Experiment in Art*, ed. and revised by M. Burleigh-Motley (London, 1986).

Grossman, J.D., "Feminine Images in Old Russian Literature and Art," *California Slavic Studies*, 11, 1980, pp. 37–70.

--------, "Russian Symbolism and the Year 1905: the Case of Valeryi Briusov," *Slavic Review*, 61, 1983, pp. 391–462.

Hammarstrom, D.L., *Circus Rings Around Russia* (Hamdon, CT, 1983).

Haskell, F., *History and Its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past* (New Haven, 1993).

Heil, J., "Russian Futurism and the Cinema: Majakovskij's Film Work of 1913," *Russian Literature*, XIX, 1986, pp. 175–92.

Henderson, L.D., *The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidean Geometry in Modern Art* (Princeton, 1983).

Herbert, J.D., *Fauve Painting: The Making of Cultural Politics* (New Haven, 1992).

Herlihy, P., "Joy of the Rus': Rites and Rituals of Russian Drinking," *The Russian Review*, 50, 1991, pp. 131–47.

High and Low: Modern Art and Popular Culture (New York, 1990).

"High Art and Low Life," *Studio International*, 201, 1993.

Hiller, S., ed., *The Myth of Primitivism* (London and New York, 1991).

Hilton, A., *Russian Folk Art* (Bloomington, 1995).

Howard, J., *Art Nouveau: International and National Styles in Europe* (Manchester, 1996).

------, *The Union of Youth: An Artists' Society of the Russian Avant-Garde* (Manchester, 1992).

Hubbs, J., *Mother Russia: The Feminine Myth in Russian Culture* (Bloomington, 1988).

Iakoviev, L., ed., *Drevonsti Rossiiskago gosudarstva*, 6 vols (Moscow, 1849–1883).

Ingold, Felix P., "Zwischen Primitivismus and Rayonismus," *Neue Zuricher Zietung*, 23–24 February, 1980, p. 65.

------, "Rayonnism: Its History and Theory," *Mikhail Larionow*, (Zurich, 1987).

Isarlov, G.I., "M.F. Larionov," *Zhar-ptitsa* (Berlin), 12, 1923, pp. 2–4 and 26–30.

Ivanits, L.J., *Russian Folk Beliefs* (Armonk, 1989).

Ivanov, S.V., *Materierialy po izobrazitelnomu iskusstvu narodov Sibiri XIX–nachala XXv.* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1954).

------, *Religioznye predstavleniia i obriady narodov Sibiri v XIX–nachala XX veka* (Leningrad, 1971).

------, *Skulptura narodov severa Sibiri XIX–pervoi poloviny XX veka* (Leningrad, 1970).

Ivanova, N., "Double Suicide – the Intelligentsia and Ideology," *Russian Studies in Literature*, 31, 1995, pp. 73–96.

-------, et al., *Muzei narodnogo iskusstva* (Moscow, 1972).

Jahn, H.F., *Patriotic Culture in Russia During World War I* (Ithaca, 1995).

Jameson, F., *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Art* (London, 1981).

Johnson, R.E., *Peasant and Proletarian: The Working Class of Moscow in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Leicester, 1979).

Karlinsky, S., "Russia's Gay Literature & History (11th–20th Centuries)," *Gay Sunshine*, 29–30, 1976, pp. 1–6.

Kartinki voina Russkikh c Nemitsami (Petrograd, 1914).

Kean, B.W., *All the Empty Palaces: The Merchant Patrons of Modern Art in Pre-Revolutionary Russia* (London, 1983).

----, *French Painters, Russian Collectors: Shchukin, Morozov and Modern French Art, 1890–1914* (London, 1983).

Kennedy, J., *The "Mir iskusstvo" Group and Russian Art 1898–1912* (New York, 1977).

Khardzhiev, N., ed., *K isorii russkogo avangarda* (Stockholm, 1976).

----------, "Pamyati Natalii Goncharovoi (1881–1962) i Mikhaila Larionova (1881–1964)," *Iskusstvo knigi*, 1968, V (1963–1964), pp. 306–18.

Kingston-Mann, E. and T. Mixter, eds, *Peasant Economy, Culture and Politics of European Russia, 1800–1921* (Princeton, 1990).

Kirby, M., *Futurist Performance* (New York, 1971).

Knapp, J.F., "Primitivism and Empire: John Synge and Paul Gauguin," *Comparative Literature*, 41, 1989, pp. 53–68.

-----, "Primitivism and the Modern," *Boundary Two – A Journal of Postmodern Literature and Culture*, 15, 1987, pp. 365–79.

Kolpachki, M., ed., *Skulptura i risunki skulpturov kontsa XIX–nachala XX veka* (Moscow, 1972).

Kovtun, E., "Experiments in Book Design by Russian Artists," *Journal of Decorative and Propoganda Arts*, 5, 1987, pp. 46–59.

------, *Mikhail Larionov*, trans. by Paul Williams (Bournemouth, 1998).

------, "Vladimir Markov i otkrytie Afrikanskogo iskusstva," *Pamiatniki kultury: Novoe otkrytiia Ezhegodnik. 1980*, 1981, pp. 399–410.

Kravchenko, M., *The Word of the Russian Fairy Tale* (Bern and New York, 1987).

Kruglova, O.V., *Russkaia narodnia rezba i rospis po derevu* (Moscow, 1974).

Lawton, A., "Futurist Manifestoes as an Element of Performance," *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 19, 1985, pp. 473–91.

Leikina-Svirskaia, V.R., *Intelligentsiia v Rossii vo vtoroi polovine XIX veka* (Moscow, 1971).

Leontov, A., ed., *Russkoe dekorativnoe iskusstov*, 3 vols (Moscow, 1965).

Levin, E., *Sex and Society in the World of the Orthodox Slavs, 900–1700* (Ithaca, 1989).

Lipovsky, A., ed., *The Soviet Circus,* trans. by F. Glagoleva (Moscow, 1967).

Lloyd, J., *German Expressionism: Primitivism and Modernity* (New Haven, 1991).

Lodder, C., *Russian Constructivism* (New Haven, 1983).

------, *Russian Painting of the Avant-Garde, 1906–1924* (Edinburgh, 1993).

Loguine, T., *Gontcharova et Larionov: Cinquante Ans à Saint Germain-des-Prés. Tèmoinages et Documents Recuellis et Présentés par Tatiana Loguine* (Paris, 1971).

Long, R.C.W., *Kandinsky: the Development of an Abstract Style* (Oxford, 1980).

Lovejoy, A.O. and G.Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (New York, 1980).

Löwe, H.-D., *The Tsars and the Jews, Reform, Reaction and Anti-Semitism in Imperial Russia, 1772–1917* (Chur, Switzerland, 1993).

Malmstad, J.E., "The Sacred Profaned: Image and World in the Paintings of Mikhail Larionov," *Laboratory of Dreams: The Russian Avant-Garde and Cultural Experiment*, ed. by J.E. Bowlt and O. Matich (Stanford, 1996), pp. 153–73.

Marcadé, V., "The Peasant Theme in the Work of Kasimir Severinovich Malevich," *Malewitsch* (Cologne, 1978), pp. 94–119.

McKay, C., "Kandinsky's Ethnography: Scientific Field Work and Aesthetic Reflection," *Art History*, 17, 1994, pp. 182–208.

Manin, V., *L'art russe 1900–1935: tendances et mouvements* (Paris, 1989).

Mikhailovskii, Professor V.M., "Shamanism in Siberia and European Russia, Being the Sacred Part of Shamanstvo," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britian and Ireland*, XXIV, 1895, pp. 62–100, 126–58.

Moleva, N.M. and E. Beliutin, *Russkaia khudoahestvennaia shkola vtori poloviny XIX – nachala XX veka* (Moscow, 1977).

Molok, Yu., "Children's Drawings in Russian Futurism," *Discovering Child Art: Essays on Childhood, Primitivism and Modernism*, ed. by J. Fineberg, trans. by S. Thompson (Princeton, 1998), pp. 55–67.

Nakov, A.B., "The Iconoclastic Fury," *Studio*, 187, 1974, pp. 281–88.

Natalia Goncharova Mikhail Larionov: vospominaniia sovremennikov (Moscow, 1995).

Nathalie Gontcharova Michel Larionov (Paris, 1995).

Nekrasova, M., *Narodnoe iskusstvo kak chast kultury* (Moscow, 1983).

Netting, A, "Images and Ideas in Russian Peasant Art," *Slavic Review*, 35, 1976, pp. 48–68.

Neuberger, J., *Hooliganism: Crime, Culture and Power in St. Petersburg, 1900–1914* (Berkeley, 1993).

---------, "Stories of the Street: Hooliganism in the St. Petersburg Popular Press," *Slavic Review*, 48, 1989, pp. 177–94.

Niko Pirosmani, 1862–1918 (Leningrad, 1983).

Nilsson, N. Å., " 'Pervobytnost – Primitivizm," *Russian Literature*, 17, 1985, pp. 39–44.

Ocheretianskii, A., *Literature and Art of Avant-Garde Russia* (Newtonville, MA, 1989).

Oneil, T., "The Primitive Urge – A Twentieth Century Romance with Primitivism Changed the Face of Modern Art," *Horizons*, 27, 1984, pp. 22–28.

Ostrovskii, G.S., "Lubok v sisteme russkoi khudozhestvennoi kulture XVII–XX vekov," *Sovetskoe iskusstvoznanie '80*, 2, 1981, pp. 154–68.

---------, "O gorodskom izobrazitelnom folklore," *Sovetskoe iskusstvoznanie '74*, 2, 1975, pp. 297–311.

Ovsiannikov, Y. and A. Shkarovskii-Raffé, *Lubok: Russkie narodnye kartinki XVII–XVIII vv, The Lubok: 17th–18th Century Russian Broadsides* (Moscow, 1968).

Ovsiannikova, E.B., "The Role of the Moscow Architectural School in the Emergence of the Russian Avant-Garde," *New Perspectives on Russian and Soviet Artistic Culture*, ed. by J.O. Norman, trans. by Dr C. Cooke and J.O. Norman (London, 1994), pp. 62–79.

----------, "Iz istorii pervykh vystavok lubka," *Sovetskoe iskusstvoznanie '85*, 20, 1986, pp. 423–44.

Owen, T.C., *Capitalism and Politics in Russia: a Social History of the Moscow Merchants, 1855–1905* (Cambridge and New York, 1981).

Parton, A., *Mikhail Larionov and the Russian Avant-Garde* (London, 1993).

------, "Russian Rayism, The Work and Theory of Mikhail Larionov and Natalia Goncharova 1912–1914: Ouspensky's Four Dimensional Super Race?" *Leonardo*, 16, 1983, pp. 298–305.

Perrie, M., "Folklore as Evidence of Peasant *Mentalité*: Social Attitudes and Values in Russian Popular Culture," *The Russian Review*, 48, 1989, pp. 119–32.

Pilbeam, P.M., *The Middle Classes in Europe, 1789–1914: France Germany, Italy and Russia* (London, 1990).

Plotnikov, V.I., *Folklor i russkoe izovrazitelnoe iskusstvo vtoroi poloviny XIX veka* (Leningrad, 1987).

Poggioli, R., *The Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Cambridge, 1968).

Pomeshchikov, V., "Narodnoe tvorchestvo rossii," *Dekorativnoe Iskusstvo*, part 5, 1977, pp. 7–13.

Pospelov, G.G., *Bubnovyi valet* (Moscow, 1990).

--------, "Larionov and Children's Drawings," *Discovering Child Art: Essays on Childhood, Primitivism and Modernism*, ed. by J. Fineberg, trans. by R. Barris (Princeton, 1998), pp. 40–4.

--------, "Larionov i Pirosmanashvili: K voprosu o sudbakh primitiva v iskusstve noveishego vremeni tezisy," *IV Mezhdunarodny Simpozium po Gruzinskomu Iskusstvu*, Tibilisi, 1983.

--------, "M.F. Larionov," *Sovetskoe iskusstvoznanie '79*, 2, 1980, pp. 238–66.

--------, "Nasledstvo Goncharovoi i Larionova," *Nashe Nasledstve*, 1, 1990, pp. 152–58.

--------, "O 'valetakh' bubnovykh i valetakh chernovykh," *Panorama iskusstve '77*, 1978, pp. 127–42.

--------, et al., eds, *Primitiv i ego mesto v khudozhestvennoi kulture novogo i noveishego vremeni* (Moscow, 1983).

--------, "'Vostok i russkoe iskusstvo:' Vystavka i issledovaniia," *Dekorativnoe Iskusstvo*, 245, 1978, pp. 29–34.

Povelikhina, A. and E. Kovton, *Russian Avant-Garde and Popular Art* (Leningrad, 1991).

---------- and ------, *Russian Painted Shop Sign and Avant-Garde Artists* (Leningrad, 1991).

Price, S., *Primitive Art in Civilized Places* (Chicago and London, 1989).

Pronin, A., *Byliny: Heroic Tales of Old Russia* (Frankfurt, 1971).

Propp, V., *Theory and History of Folklore*, trans. by A. and R. Martin (Manchester, 1984).

Punin, N., "Impressionisticheskii period v tvorchestve M.F. Larionova," *Materialy po russkomu iskusstvu*, 1 (Leningrad, 1928), pp. 287–91.

Ransel, D.L., ed., *The Family in Imperial Russia: New Lines of Historical Research* (Urbana, IL, 1978).

Raveskii, D.S., *Model mira skifskoi kultury* (Moscow, 1985).

Read, C., *Culture and Power in Revolutionary Russia: The Intelligentsia and Transition from Tsarism to Communism* (Basingstoke, 1990).

----, *Religion, Revolution and the Russian Intelligentsia, 1900–1912* (Basingstoke, 1979).

Regan, S., ed., *The Politics of Pleasure: Aesthetics and Cultural Theory* (Philadelphia, 1992).

Rhodes, C., *Primitivism and Modern Art* (London, 1994).

Riasanovsky, N.V., *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825–1855* (Berkeley, 1969).

Richardson, W., *Zolotoe runo and Russian Modernism: 1905–1910* (Ann Arbor, 1986).

Roman, G.H. and V. H. Marquardt, eds, *The Avant-Garde Frontier, Russia Meets the West, 1910–1930* (Gainsville, FL, 1992).

Romanovich, S.M., "Vospominaniia o M.F. Larionove," *Podem*, 1988, 6, pp. 121–33.

Rovinskii, D.A., *Russkiia narodniia kartinki* (St. Petersburg, 1881).

Rosenthal, B.G., *Dmitri Sergeevich Merezhkovsky and the Silver Age: the Development of a Revolutionary Mentality* (The Hague, 1975).

Rozova, L.K., et al., *Muzei narodnogo iskusstva i khudozhestvennye promysli* (Moscow, 1972).

Rubin, W., ed., *"Primitivism" in Twentieth Century Art*, 2 vols (New York, 1984).

Rusinko, E., "Adamism and Acmeist Primitivism," *Slavic and East European Journal*, 32, 1988, pp. 84–97.

Russakov, Iu. R., "Matisse in Russia in the Autumn of 1911," *The Burlington Magazine*, CXVII, 1975, pp. 284–96.

Russkaia khudozhestvennaia kultura kontsa XIX–nachala XX veka (1908–1917): kniga chetvertaia: izobrazitelnoe iskusstvo, arkitektura, dekorativno-prikladnoe iskusstvo (Moscow, 1980).

Said, E., *Culture and Imperialism* (London, 1993).

----, *Orientialism* (New York, 1985).

Salmond, W.R., *Arts and Crafts in Late Imperial Russia: Reviving the Kustar Art Industries, 1870–1917* (Cambridge, 1996).

Sarabianov, D.V., "K probleme sravnitelnogo izuchenia russkoi i zapadnoevropeiskoi zhivopisi," *Iskusstvo*, 7, 1975, pp. 62–67.

----------, "Niko Pirosmanashvili sredi russkikh khudozhnikov na vystavke 'Mishen,'" *IV Mezhdunarodny Simpozium po Gruzinskomu Iskusstvu*, Tbilisi, 1983.

----------, "Noveishie techeniia v russkoi zhivopisi predrevoliutsionnogo desiatililetiia (Rossiia i zapad)," *Sovetskoe iskusstvoznanie '79*, 1, 1980, pp. 117–60.

----------, "Primitivistskii period v tvorchestve M.F. Larionova," *Russkaia zhivopis kontsa 1900–x nachala 1910–x godov: Ocherki* (Moscow, 1971), pp. 99–116.

----------, "Vystavka Larionova," *Sovetskaia zhivopis*, 5, 1982, pp. 189–200.

"Sbornik pravitelstvennykh rasporiazhenii po vodvoreniiu russkikh zemlevladeltsev v severo-zapadnom krae." *Vilna*, 1870.

Schafran, L., "Larionov and the Russian Vanguard," *Art News*, 68, 1969, pp. 36, 66–67.

Schjeldahl, P., "The Eye of the Revolution," *Art in America*, 69, 1981, pp. 76–91.

Segal, H.B., *Turn of the Century Cabaret: Paris, Barcelona, Munich Vienna, Cracow, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Zurich* (New York, 1987).

Sergei Diaghilev i russkoe iskusstvoe: Stati, otkrytye pisa, intervyu perepiska. Sovremenniki o Diaghileve, 2 vols (Moscow, 1982).

Shanin, T., *Russia, 1905–07: Revolution as a Moment of Truth* (New Haven, 1986).

Sharapov, S.F., "Chem spasti dvorianstvo? Zapiska predstavlennaia v osoboe soveshchanie po dvorianskom voprose... Osoboe prilozhenie k no. 20 gazety," *Russkii trud*, 1897.

Sharp, J.A., "Primitivism, 'Neoprimitivism' and the Art of Natalia Goncharova, 1907–1914." (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1992).

-----, "Redrawing the Margins of Russian Vanguard Art: N. Goncharova's Trial for Pornography in 1910," *Sexuality and the Body in Russian Culture*, ed. by J.T. Costlow, et al. (Stanford, 1993), pp. 97–123.

Shchukin, P., *Kratkoe opisanie Shchukinskogo muzeia v Moskve* (Moscow, 1895).

Smith, R.E.F. and D. Christian, *Bread and Salt: A Social and Economic History of Food and Drink in Russia* (Cambridge, 1984).

Sokolov, K., "P.P. Konchalovsky (1876–1956): on His Methods as a Painter of Pictures," *Leonardo*, XI, 1978, pp. 321–25.

Stasov, V., *Slavonskii i vostochnyi ornament* (St. Petersburg, 1887).

------, *Stati i zametki, ne vosbedshie v sobranie sochinenii*, 2 vols (Moscow, 1954).

Stavrou, T.G., ed., *Art and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Russia* (Bloomington, 1983).

Steneberg, E., "Larinow, Gontscharowa und der Rayonismus," *Das Kunstwerk*, 16, February 1963, pp. 11–22.

Sternin, G., *Khudozhestvennaia zhizn rossii 1900–1910-kh godov* (Moscow, 1988).

Stites, R., "Prostitute and Society in Pre-Revolutionary Russia," *Järbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 31, 1983, pp. 348–64.

------, *Russian Popular Culture: Entertainment and Society Since 1900* (Cambridge, 1992).

Stupples, P., *Pavel Kuznetsov: His Life and Art* (Cambridge, 1989).

Struve, G., "Pisma M.F. Larionova o N.S. Gumileve," *Mosty*, 1970, pp. 403–10.

Svirskaia, V.R., *Russkaia intelligentsiia v 1900–1917 godakh* (Moscow, 1981).

Sytova, A., *The Lubok: Russian Folk Pictures 17th–19th Centuries* (Leningrad, 1984).

Szajkowski, Z., *Illustrated Sourcebook of Russian Anti-Semitism* (New York, 1980).

Tagg, J., *Grounds of Dispute: Art History, Cultural Politics and the Discursive Field* (Basingstoke, 1992).

Thompson, E., *Understanding Russia: The Holy Fool in Russian Culture* (Lanham, MD, 1987).

Timms, E., and P. Collier, eds, *Visions and Blueprints: Avant- Garde Culture and Radical Politics in Early Twentieth-Century Europe* (Manchester, 1988).

Torgovnick, M., *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellects, Modern Lives* (Chicago, 1990).

Tseretelli, N., *Russkaia krestianskaia igrushka* (Moscow, 1933).

Tsivian, Yu., *Early Cinema in Russia and its Cultural Reception*, trans. by A. Bodger (London, 1994).

Tsvetaeva, M., "Natalia Goncharova (zhizn i tvorchestvo)," *Prometei*, 1969, pp. 144–201.

Vagner, G.K., *Mastera drevnerrusskoi skulptury: Relefy Iureva-Polskogo* (Moscow, 1966).

Vasilenko, V.M., *Istoriia Russkogo Iskusstva* (Moscow, 1964).

---------, *Russkaia narodnia rezba i rospis* (Moscow, 1947).

---------, and G.K. Vagner, *Narodnoe iskusstvo* (Moscow, 1974).

Vanslova, V.V., *Russkaia progressivnaia khudozhestvennaia kritika vtoroi poloviny XIX–nachala XX veka: Khrestomatiia* (Moscow, 1977).

Vastokas, J.M., "The Shamanic Tree of Life," *Artscanada*, 30, 1973–1974, pp. 125–49.

Venturi, F., *Roots of Revolution: A History of the Populist and Social Movements in Nineteenth-Century Russia*, trans. by F. Haskell (New York, 1966).

Voronov, V.S., *O krest ianskom iskusstve* (Moscow, 1972).

Vytkovskaia, J., "Slav Mythology," *Feminist Companion to Mythology*, ed. by C. Larrington, trans. by C. Kelly (London, 1992), pp. 102–17.

Warner, E., *Folk Theater and the Dramatic Entertainments in Russia* (Cambridge, 1987).

Weiss, P., *Kandinsky and Old Russia: The Artist as Ethnographer* (New Haven, 1995).

Weissman, N.B., "Rural Crime in Tsarist Russia: The Question of Hooliganism, 1904–1914," *Slavic Review*, 37, 1978, pp. 228–41.

Williams, R.C. and R.Chadwell, *Artists in Revolution: Portraits of the Russian Avant-Garde, 1905–25* (London, 1978).

Wolff, J., *The Social Production of Art* (New York, 1984).

Zabylyn, M., *Russkii narod: Ego obuchai, obriady, predaniia, sueveriia i poeziia* (Moscow, 1880).

Zdanevich, K., *Niko Pirosmanishvili* (Tbilisi, 1963).

Zelinsky, B., "Der Primitivismus und die Anfänge der avantgardistschen Malerei und Literatur in Russland," *Zetischrift für Äesthetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*, 27, 1982, pp. 121–41.

--------, *Russische Avantgarde, 1907–1921, vom Primitivismus zum Konstructivismus* (Bonn, 1983).

Zguta, R., *Russian Minstrels: A History of the Skomorokhi* (Oxford, 1978).

Zhegalova, S.K., *Russkaia narodnaia zhivopis* (Moscow, 1975).

---------, *Sokrovishcha russkogo narodnogo iskusstva* (Moscow, 1967).

Zhenshchiny-Khudozhniki Moskvy. Vsemirnomu kongressu zhenschin: Katalog vystavki proizvedenii (Moscow, 1987).

Zubova, T., "Traditsionnoe i naivnoe," *Dekorativnoe Iskusstvo*, 10, 1976, pp. 28–31.

List of Illustrations

17. Mikhail Larionov, *The Gypsy*, 1909, oil on canvas, 95 x 81 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection.

18. Novgorod School, *Madonna Temderness*, end of fourteenth–beginning of fifteenth century, tempera on panel, 53 x 41 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

19. Alexei Venetsianov, *Harvesting: Summer*, before 1827, oil on canvas, 60 x 48.3 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

20. Mikhail Larionov, *Country Bathers*, 1910, oil on canvas, 89 x 109 cm, Krasnodar, Lunacharskii Art Museum.

21. Mikhail Larionov, *The Baker*, 1909, oil on canvas, 107 x 102 cm, Lugano, Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection.

22. Mikhail Larionov, *Loaves*, 1910, oil on canvas, 102 x 84 cm, Paris, Private Collection.

23. Anonymous, *Bread and Grocery Shop Sign*, first quarter of the twentieth century, oil on burnished iron, 152 x 112 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

24. Ilia Mashkov, *Loaves*, 1912, oil on canvas, 105 x 133 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

25. Mikhail Larionov, *Kneading Dough*, 1909, oil on canvas, 55 x 70 cm, Cologne, Galerie Gmurzyrisk.

26. Anonymous, *Preparing Flour, Baking*, sixteenth century. Illustrated in R.E.F. Smith and David Christian, *Bread and Salt: A Social and Economic History of Food and Drink in Russia* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 17.

27. Anonymous, *The Pancake Vendor*, 1760s, woodcut, 35.8 x 29.6 cm, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

28. Natalia Goncharova, *The Bread Vendor*, 1911, oil on canvas, 100.5 x 87.5 cm, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

29. Natalia Goncharova, *Still Life with Pineapple*, *ca.* 1908, oil on canvas, 130 x 146 cm, Paris, Musée National d'Art.

30. Natalia Goncharova, *Cat with a Tray*, 1910–11, oil on canvas, 99.5 x 93 cm, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

31. Natalia Goncharova, *Portrait of Larionov and His Platoon Commander*, 1911, oil on canvas, 106.8 x 100 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

32. Mikhail Larionov, *Dancing*, 1909, oil on canvas, 66 x 95 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

33. Nikolai Sapunov, *The Ball*, *ca.* 1907–10, tempera on canvas, Moscow, Collection of V.A. Dudakov and M.K. Koschuro. Illustrated in A.A. Rusakova, *Simbolizm v russkoi zhivopisi* (Moscow, 1995), p. 284.

34. Vladimir Egorov, illustration of *The Ball* from L. N. Andreev's *Life of Man* for the Moscow Art Theatre, 1907, gouache, india ink and ceruse on paper, Moscow, The Gorky Museum of the Moscow Artistic Academy of Theatre. Illustrated in *Russkaia khudozhesvennaia kulura kontsa XIX–hachala XX veka (1908–1917)*, book 4 (Moscow, 1980), p. 175.

35. Sophia Baudouin de Courtenay, *Scene in a Tavern*, *ca.* 1911, published in *Ogonek* in 1911.

36. Mikhail Larionov, *Soldier's Tavern*, 1909–10, oil on canvas, 69 x 98 cm, Bâle, Galerie Beyeler.

37. Vincent van Gogh, *Night Café*, 1888, oil on canvas, 29 x 35 cm, New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery. Bequest of Stephen Carlton Clark.

38. Mikhail Larionov, *Quarrel in a Tavern*, 1911, oil on canvas, 70.7 x 93.6 cm, Nizhnii Novgorod, The State Art Musuem.

39. Mikhail Larionov, *Quarrel in a Tavern*, 1911, oil on canvas, 72 x 95 cm, Lugano, Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection.

40. Anonymous, *In the Tavern*, mid eighteenth century, woodcut, 36.2 x 30.3 cm., St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

41. Anonymous, *Paramoshka and Savoska as Card Players*, 1760s, woodcut, 29 x 33.1 cm, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

42. Anonymous, *Forma, Paramoshka and Yerioma*, 1760s, woodcut, 30.1 x 34.4 cm, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

43. Anonymous, *Know Thyself, Give Instructions in Your Own House*, eighteenth century, woodcut, 36.6 x 29 cm, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

44. Anonymous, *I Am a Hop High Head*, late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, copper engraving, 39.5 x 58.5, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

45. Anonymous, *Conversation of a Drinker with a Non-Drinker*, first quarter of the nineteenth century, copper engraving, 37.4 x 30.4 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

46. Anonymous, *The Drunkard in the Tavern*, second quarter of the nineteenth century, copper engraving, 35.5 x 27.5 cm, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

47. Anonymous, *Two Peasants Visiting a Tavern*, 1857, transfer lithograph, 23.7 x 36.5 cm, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

48. Natalia Goncharova. *The Drunks*, 1911, oil on canvas, 119 x 98 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

49. Anonymous, *The Barber Wants to Cut the Old Believer's Beard*, first half of the eighteenth century, woodcut, 36.4 x 30.5 cm, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

50. Novgorod School, *The Ascension*, 1542, tempera on panel, 179.8 x 138.2 cm, Novgorod, The Novgorod Museum.

51. Mikhail Larionov, *Circus Dancer Before Her Entrance*, 1911–12, oil on canvas, 105 x 73.5 cm, Omsk Museum of Fine Arts.

52. Mikhail Larionov, *Prostitute at the Hairdresser's*, *ca.* 1910, oil on canvas, 151 x 150 cm, Paris, Private Collection.

53. Mikhail Larionov, *Woman with a Hat*, *ca.* 1910–12, oil on canvas, 142 x 102 cm, Paris, Private Collection.

54. Henri Tolouse-Lautrec, *In the Wings*, 1899, crayon on paper, 31 x 20 cm, Cambridge, MA, The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University. Bequest of Grenville L. Winthrop.

55. Kees van Dongen, *Red Dancer*, 1907–08, oil on canvas, 99.7 x 81 cm, Moscow, The State Museum of Western Art.

56. Natalia Goncharova, *Wrestlers*, 1909–10, oil on canvas, 100 x 122 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

57. Natalia Goncharova, *Wrestlers*, 1909–10, oil on canvas, 118.5 x 103.5 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

58. Anonymous, *Stout Fellows, Doughty Wrestlers*, mid eighteenth century, woodcut, 34.5 x 29.5 cm, Moscow, The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts.

59. Ilia Mashkov, *Self Portrait with Petr Konchalovskii*, 1910, oil on canvas, 208 x 270 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

60. Still from *Drama in the Futurists' Cabaret Number 13*, released in 1914. Illustrated in C. Gray, *The Russian Experiment in Art, 1863–1922*, revised and enlarged by M. Burleigh-Motley (New York, 1986), p. 116.

61. Mikhail Larionov, *Scene – The Cinema*, 1912, oil on canvas, 56 x 69 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

62. Mikhail Larionov, *Women*, late 1890s, pastel and graphite on paper, 46 x 57.5 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

63. Mikhail Larionov, *Bathers*, *ca.* 1906, oil on canvas, 103 x 85 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

64. Mikhail Larionov, *Heads of Bathers (Study)*, 1908, oil on canvas, 66 x 95 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection.

65. Mikhail Larionov, *Bathers*, 1908, oil on canvas, 46 x 55 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection.

66. Paul Gauguin, *What Are You Jealous?* [*Aha oe Feii?*], 1892, 66 x 89 cm, Moscow, The Pushkin Museum of Fine Art.

67. Mikhail Larionov, *The Ladies' Hairdresser*, 1909–10, oil on canvas, 159 x 152 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection.

68. Mikhail Larionov, *Officer at the Hairdresser's*, 1909–10, oil on canvas, 117 x 89 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection.

69. Mikhail Larionov, *Sonia the Courtesan*, 1912, transfer lithograph and watercolour on postcard, 9.5 x 14.2 cm, Paris, Private Collection.

70. Edvard Munch, *Tête-à-Tête*, 1895, oil on canvas, 65.5 x 75.5 cm, Oslo, Municiple Museum (Munch Museum).

71. Mikhail Larionov, *The Blue Nude*, *ca.* 1908, oil on canvas, 73 x 116 cm, Lugano, Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection.

72. Paul Gauguin, *Alone* [*Otahi*], 1893, oil on canvas, 50 x 73 cm, Private collection.

73. Mikhail Larionov, *Portrait of Goncharova*, 1910, oil on canvas, 49.5 x 69.5 cm, Cologne, Gallerie Gmurzynska.

74. Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, 1538, oil on canvas, 120 x 165 cm, Florence, The Uffizi.

75. Eduard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863, oil on canvas, 130 x 190 cm, Paris, Musée d'Orsay.

76. Mikhail Larionov, *Adoration*, *ca.* 1909–10, pastel on paper, 27.7 x 24.8 cm, Geneva, Museum of Art and History.

77. Mikhail Larionov, *Katsap Venus*, 1912, oil on canvas, 99.5 x 129.5 cm, Gorky Art Museum.

78. Anonymous, *The Kazan Cat*, first half of the eighteenth century, woodcut, 33.6 x 26.9 cm, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

79. Mikhail Larionov, *Jewish Venus*, 1912, oil on canvas, 98 x 139 cm, 1912, Sverdlovsk State Art Museum.

80. Paul Gauguin, *The Queen, The King's Wife*, 1896, oil on canvas, 97 x 130 cm, Moscow, Pushkin Museum of Fine Art.

81. Pablo Picasso, *Woman with a Fan* (*After the Ball*), 1908, oil on canvas, 150 x 100 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum.

82. Pablo Picasso, *Woman with a Fan*, 1908, oil on canvas, 101 x 81 cm, Moscow, Pushkin Musem of Fine Art.

83. Mikhail Larionov, *Morning*, *ca.* 1908–10, oil on canvas, 72 x 67 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

84. Mikhail Larionov, *Gypsy Venus*, 1912–1913, oil on canvas, 68 x 85.5 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

85. Mikhail Larionov, Pochoir from *Voyage en Tuquie*, *ca.* 1928, gouache on paper, 28.3 x 20.8 cm, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

86. Anonymous, *The Annunciation with St. Theodore of Tyron*, second half of the fourteenth century, tempera on panel, 199 x 158 cm, Novgorod, Novgorod Museum of History, Art and Architecture.

87. Anonymous, *Alkonost and Siren, the Birds of Paradise*, late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, line engraving, 29.7 x 33 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

88. Mikhail Larionov, *Boulevard Venus*, 1913, oil on canvas, 116 x 86 cm, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

89. Mikhail Larionov, *The Waitress*, 1911, oil on canvas, 102 x 70 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

90. Mikhail Larionov, *Provincial Coquette*, 1909, oil on canvas, 81 x 65 cm, Kazan Art Museum.

91. Mikhail Larionov, *Mania*, *ca.* 1912, medium, dimensions and current whereabouts unknown. Illustrated in C. Gray, *The Russian Experiment in Art, 1863–1922*, revised and enlarged by M. Burleigh-Motley (New York, 1986), p. 108.

92. Angmasgsalik Eskimo statuette, early twentieth century, wood, 8.7 cm (height), Oxford, Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford.

93. Mikhail Larionov, *Mania the Bitch*, pochoir from *Voyage en Turque*, published in 1928, gouache, silk-screen and stencil on paper, 32.3 x 24.8 cm, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

94. Painted Wooden Figure, Abelam Tribe, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea, late nineteenth or early twentieth century, painted wood, 107.9 cm (height), New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection of Primitive Art. Purchase, Nelson A. Rockefeller Gift, 1962.

95. Mikhail Larionov, *The Whore*, 1913, gouache on paper, 51 x 35.4, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection.

96. Mikhail Larionov, *Spring 1912*, 1912, oil on canvas, 86.5 x 68.3 cm, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

97. Natalia Goncharova, *Kamennia Baba*, 1908, oil on canvas, 88 x 67.5 cm, Kostroma, Regional Picture Gallery.

98. Natalia Goncharova, *Pillars of Salt*, 1909, oil on canvas, 80 x 95 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection.

99a–b. Eskimo amulets, ivory and bone, St. Petersburg, Dmitri S. Varchavskii Collection. Illustrated in C. Burrus, *Les Collectionneurs Russes d'une révolution à l'autre* (Chêne, 1992), pp. 104–05.

100. Mikhail Larionov, *Happy Autumn*, 1912, oil on canvas, 53.5 x 44.5 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

101. Mikhail Larionov, *Seasons: Spring*, 1912, oil on canvas, 142 x 118 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

102. Mikhail Larionov, *Seasons: Summer*, 1912, oil on canvas, 138 x 117 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection, Paris, Private Collection.

103. Mikhail Larionov, *Seasons: Autumn*, 1912–13, oil on canvas, 136 x 115 cm, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

104. Mikhail Larionov, *Seasons: Winter*, 1912–13, oil on canvas, 100 x 122.3 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery,

105. Anonymous, *A Lesson for Husbands, Poor Peasant Countrymen and Extravagant Wives*, 1874, transfer lithograph, 32.1 x 39.6 cm, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

106. Anonymous, *The Peasant* [*Muzhichek*], 1849, copper engraving, 49.8 x 39.8 cm, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

107. Natalia Goncharova, *Round Dance* [*Khorovod*], 1911, oil on canvas, 133 x 100 cm, The Serpukhov History and Art Museum.

108. Alexei Vanetsianov, *In the Field: Spring*, before 1827, oil on canvas, 51.2 x 65.5 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

109. Vasilii Maksimov, *Family Division*, 1876, oil on canvas, 106 x 148 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

110. Natalia Goncharova, *The Fruit Harvest*, 1909, oil on canvas, 102 x 72 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

111. Natalia Goncharova, *The Fruit Harvest*, 1909, oil on canvas, 102 x 72 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

112. Natalia Goncharova, *The Fruit Harvest*, 1909, oil on canvas, 102 x 69 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

113. Natalia Goncharova, *The Fruit Harvest*, 1909, oil on canvas, 104 x 69 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

114. Paul Gauguin, *Gathering Fruit* [*Ruperupe*], 1899, oil on canvas, 128 x 190 cm, Moscow, The Pushkin Museum of Fine Art.

115. Paul Gauguin, *Man Picking Fruit from a Tree*, 1897, oil on canvas, 92.5 x 73.3 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum.

116. Paul Gauguin, *The Month of Mary* or *Woman Carrying Flowers* [*Te Avae No Maria*], 1899, 96 x 74.5 cm, oil on canvas, St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum.

117. Natalia Goncharova, *Haycutting*, 1910, oil on canvas, 98 x 117.7 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection, Private Collection.

118. Anonymous, *The Old Testament Trinity*, first half of the sixteenth century, St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum. Illustrated in A. Kostsova, *The Subject of Early Russian Icons* (St. Petersburg, 1994), p. 111.

119. Natalia Goncharova, *Haymaking*, 1910, oil on canvas, 118 x 96.7 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

120 a–d. Natalia Goncharova, *The Evangelists*, 1910–11, oil on canvas, 204 x 58 cm (each), St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

121. Natalia Goncharova, *Sheep Shearing*, 1907, oil on canvas, 118 x 102 cm, The Serpukhov History and Art Museum.

122. Natalia Goncharova, *Peasants Picking Apples*, 1911, oil on canvas, 104 x 97.5 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

123. Kazimir Malevich, *Woman with Buckets and a Child*, 1910–11, oil on canvas, 73 x73 cm, Amsterdam, Stedlijk Museum.

124. Natalia Goncharova, *Planting Potatoes*, 1909, oil on canvas, 111 x 131.5 cm, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne.

125. Jean-François Millet, *The Gleaners*, 1857, oil on canvas, 83.5 x 111 cm, Paris, Musée d'Orsay.

126. Natalia Goncharova, *Spring Gardening*, 1908–09, oil on canvas, 112 x 160 cm, London, The Tate Gallery.

127. Natalia Goncharova, *Washing Linen*, 1910, oil on canvas, 105 x 117 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

128. Natalia Goncharova, *Drying Linen*, 1911, oil on canvas, 102 x 146 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

129. Natalia Goncharova, *Fishing*, 1907, oil on canvas, 95.7 x 86.5 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

130. Natalia Goncharova, *Fishing*, 1909, oil on canvas, 111.7 x 99.7 cm, Lugano, Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection.

131. Natalia, Goncharova, *Pond*, *ca.* 1909, oil on canvas, 117 x 103 cm, current whereabouts unknown.

132. Natalia Goncharova, *Fishers* (*pond*), 1909, oil on canvas, 116.5 x 102.2 cm, Des Moines, IA, Louise Noun Collection.

133. Grigori Soroka, *Fishermen: View of Lake Moldino*, 1843–44, oil on canvas, 67 x 102 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

134a–d Natalia Goncharova, *The Mystical Images of War*, published in 1914, lithographs, 33 x 25 cm (each).

135. Dmitri Livitskii, *Portrait of Catherine the Great in the Temple of the Goddess of Justice*, *ca.* 1780, oil on canvas, 110 x 76.8 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

136. Natalia Goncharova, *Portrait of Larionov and His Platoon Commander*, 1911, oil on canvas, 119 x 97 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

137. Orest Kiprenskii, *Portrait of E. V. Davydov*, 1809, oil on canvas, 162 x 116 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

138. Auguste Desarnod, *The Battle of Bordino*, 1810s, oil on canvas, 105 x 144 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum.

139. Anonymous, *The Battle of Yeruslan Lazarevich with the Dragon Gorynych*, early nineteenth century, line engraving, 38.6 x 36 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

140. Anonymous, *Count Matvei Ivanovich Platov*, 1851, copper engraving, 29.6 x 38 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

141. Anonymous, *The Battle of Liebstadt*, first quarter of the nineteenth century, copper engraving, 29.8 x 38.7 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

142. Anonymous, *Russia's War with Japan in 1904*, 1904, lithograph, 43.5 x 30.5 cm, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

143. Anonymous, *Major General Alexander Seslavin*, 1839, copper engraving, 30.4 x 24.6 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

144. Pavel Fedotov, *The Major's Courtship*, 1848, oil on canvas, 58.3 x 75.4 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

145. Leonid Solomatkin, *The Carol Singers*, 1872, oil on canvas, 32.3 x 51.2 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

146. Ivan Terebenev, *Retreat of the French Calvary Who Ate Their Horses in Russia*, 1812. Illustrated in A. Kaganovich, *Ivan Ivanovich Terebenev, 1780–1815* (Moscow, 1956), p. 100.

147. Evgenii Lancere, *Funeral Feast*, published in *Adskaiia Pochta* (No. 2), 1906.

148. Anonymous, *Application to the Tsar*, *ca.* 1905–06. Illustrated in V.T. Pashuto et al., *Illiustrirovannaia istoriia SSSR* (Moscow, 1980), p. 193.

149. Anonymous, *The Ruling Class Feasts and Whores While the People Suffer and Toil*, published in *Satira*, no. 1, 1906.

150. Mikhail Larionov, *Puppet Theatre*, late 1890s, tempera on paper, 25 x 27.5 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

151. Mikhail Larionov, *Soldiers*, "first" version, *ca.* 1910–11, oil on canvas, 73 x 95 cm, London, Private Collection.

152. Mikhail Larionov, *Soldiers*, version 2b, *ca.* 1911–13, oil on canvas, 88 x 102 cm, reproduced in Eganburi (1913) and Parton (1993).

153. Mikhail Larionov, *Soldiers*, version 2c, post-1913, oil on canvas, 88 x 102 cm, Los Angeles, The Los Angeles County Museumm of Art.

154. Anonymous, *The Reception Room of Count A. Benkendorf*, late 1820s, watercolour on paper, 24.6 x 30.3 cm, St. Petersburg, The Pushkin Institute of Russian Literature.

155. Aldolf Jebens, *A Camp Scene Near Krasnoye Selo*, 1849, oil on canvas, 55.6 x 65.5 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

156. Pavel Fedotov, *At the Camp Near the Front Line: A Group Portrait of Officers of the Findland Regiment*, 1840–41, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum. Illustrated in M.N. Shumova *Pavel Fedotov Katalog* (St. Petersburg, 1993), p. 76.

157. Gustav Schwarz, *Unter-officers of the Life-Guard Findland Regiment with the Camp in the Background*, 1849, oil on canvas, 47 x 37 cm, Pavlosk, The Pavlosk Palace Museum.

158. Pavel Fedotov, *The Arrival of a Palace Grenadier at his Former Company of the Finland Regiment* (sketch), 1850, oil on cardboard, 25 x 39 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

159. Mikhail Larionov, *Soldiers Playing Cards*, *ca.* 1904–06, oil on cardboard, 38 x 46 cm, Paris, Private Collection.

160. Mikhail Larionov, *Resting Soldier*, *ca.*1911, oil on canvas, 119 x 122 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

161. Pavel Fedotov, *Encore, Again Encore!*, 1851–52, oil on canvas, 34.3 x 46 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

162. Mikhail Larionov, *Salvo*, 1910, oil on canvas, 88 x 89 cm, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

163. N.N. Troianskii, *Dura-Skazka* [*Joke-Folk Tale*], published in *Signal* (No. 2), 1905.

164. A.M. Vakhrameev, *Military Execution*, published in *Adskaiia Pochta* (No. 2), 19 XI 1905.

165. Anonymous, *Execution,* published in *Gammiun* (No. 1), 1905.

166. Mikhail Larionov, *Soldier in a Wood*, 1911, oil on canvas, 84.5 x 91.4 cm, Edinburgh, The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art.

167. Mikhail Larionov, *Soldier on a Horse*, 1911, oil on canvas, 87 x 99 cm, London, The Tate Gallery.

168. Anonymous, *St. George and the Dragon*, late fourteenth century, tempera on panel, 56 x 41 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

169. Anonymous, *Calvary Captain N.A. Mailevskii of the Life-Guard Hussar Regiment*, 1860s, photograph. Illustrated in V.M. Glinka, *Russkii voennyi kostium XVIII–nachala XX veka* (Leningrad, 1988), p. 64.

170. Anonymous, *The Officer and Private of the Saint Petersburg Dragoon Regiment*, 1802–03, tinted engraving, 19 x 27.1 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

171. Mikhail Larionov, *Smoking Soldier*, 1911, oil on canvas, 99 x 72 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

172. Pavel Fedotov, *Portrait of Pavel Petrovich Zhdanovich*, 1850–51, oil on canvas, 15.5 x 11.5 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Musuem.

173. Paul Cézanne, *Boy in a Red Vest*, *ca.* 1888–90, oil on canvas, 89.5 x 72.4 cm, Washington, DC, The National Gallery of Art. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon.

174. Wooden Soldiers, Bogorodskoye region, Vladimir Province. Illustrated in L. Dain, *Russian Toys* (Moscow, 1987), p. 72.

175. Sergei Chekhonin, *The Folktale of a Mama and Her Unscrupulous Boys*, published in *Zritel* (No. 21), 17 XI 1905.

176. Anonymous, *The Chernigovo-Saratovskie Petrushki*, published in *Zritel* (No. 21), 17 XI 1905.

177. Ivan Terebenev, *Play Acting*, 1812. Illustrated in A. Kaganovich, *Ivan Ivanovich Terebenev, 1780–1815* (Moscow, 1956), p. 109.

178. Mikhail Larionov, *The Head of a Soldier*, *ca.* 1911, oil on canvas, 55 x 44 cm, Private Collection.

179. Anonymous, *The Apostle Thomas*, fifteenth century, tempera on panel, 54 x 39.6 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

180. Mikhail Larionov, *Self Portrait*, *ca.* 1910–1912, oil on canvas, 104 x 89 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection.

181. Mikhail Larionov, *The Head of a Bull*, from the triptych *The Farm*, 1912, oil on canvas, 85 x 67 cm, Paris, Collection Cournand.

182. Novgorod School, *The Vernicle*, late twelfth–early thirteenth century, tempera on panel, 77 x 71 cm, Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

183. Natalia Goncharova, *The Jewish Family*, 1912, oil on canvas, 164 x 131 cm, Paris, Private Collection.

184. Natalia Goncharova, *Jewish Shop*, 1912, oil on canvas, 96.3 x 128.5 cm, The State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

185. Anonymous, *Is Explanation Necessary?*, published in *Zemshchina*, 1180, 6 December 1912.

186. Natalia Goncharova, *Jews of Various Ages*, reproduced in *Ogonek*, October 1913.

187. Natalia Goncharova, *Monk with a Cat*, 1912, oil on canvas, 100.2 x 92 cm, Edinburgh, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art.

188. Drawings of Monks' Hats. Illustrated in A. Feoktisov, ed., *Russkie Monastyri* (Moscow, 1995).

189. Carved wooden monk. Illustrated in *Russkaia narodnaia igrushka* (Moscow, [n.d.]), p. [21].

190. Yehuda Pen, *Divorce*, *ca.* 1907, oil on canvas, 144 x 187 cm, Byelorussian Museum of Arts.

191. Natalia Goncharova, *Jews: Sabbath*, 1912, oil on canvas, 137.5 x 118 cm, Tartaskoi Museum.

192. Anonymous, *The Fiery Ascension of the Prophet Elijah*, sixteenth century, St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum. Illustrated in A. Kostsova, *The Subject of Early Russian Icons* (St. Petersburg, 1994), p. 27.

193. Novgorod School, *John the Baptist in the Wilderness*, late fifteenth–early sixteenth centuries, St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum. Illustrated in A. Kostsova, *The Subject of Early Russian Icons* (St. Petersburg, 1994), p. 83.

194. Jewish tombstone with hands in the act of blessing, 1832, Kishnev. Illustrated in D. Goberman, *Jewish Tombstones in Ukraine and Moldova*, from the series *Masterpieces of Jewish Art* (Moscow, 1993), plate 245.

195. Anonymous, *The Mice Bury the Cat*, first half of the eighteenth century, woodcut, 32.8 x 57.3 cm, St. Petersburg, The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

196 Marc Chagall, *The Circumcision*, 1909, oil on canvas, 74 x 67 cm, Tallahassee, FL, Collection of Professor and Mrs. Harry Walborsky.

197. Marc Chagall, *The Holy Family*, 1910, oil on canvas, 76 x 63 cm, Zurich, Kunsthaus.

198. Natalia Goncharova, *In the Studio*, 1907–08, 109 x 97 cm, Tula Regional Art Museum.

199. Natalia Goncharova, *Elder with Seven Stars (Apocalypse)*, 1911, oil on canvas, 147 x 188 cm, Paris, Private Collection.

200 Natalia Goncharova, *Virgin with Child*, 1910, oil on canvas, 120 x 107 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection.

201. Natalia Goncharova, *Christ in Majesty*, 1910–11, gouache on paper, 56.5 x 39 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection.

202. Mark Antokolskii, *Ecce Homo*, 1873, marble, 195 cm (height), Moscow, The State Tretiakov Gallery.

203. Natalia Goncharova, *Madonna and Child*, *ca.* 1912–13, oil on canvas, 98 x 90 cm, *Ex* Tomilina-Larionova Collection.

204. Jewish Tombstone, Vilnia-Grodno region. Illustrated in F. Hubman, *The Jewish Family Album: Yesterday's World in Old Photographs*, ed. by Miriam and Lionel Kochan (London, 1975), p. 47.

205. Anonymous, *The Resurrection (Christ in Limbo)*, 1820s or 1830s, copper engraving, 38.1 x 30.8 cm, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum.

206. Workshop of the Stroganov Family, *The Ascension*, early seventeenth century, St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum. Illustrated in A. Kostsova, *The Subject of Early Russian Icons* (St. Petersburg, 1994), p. 21.

Note:

Under each plate are included the artist's name and title and date of the work. Location, media, dimensions and any other information appear in the lists of plates that appear at the beginning of each volume.

1. Natalia Goncharova, *God of Fertility*, 1909

2. Ilia Repin, *Bargehaulers on the River Volga*, 1870–73

3. Elena Polenova, *The Wild Beast (The Serpent)*, 1895–98

4. Viktor Borisov-Musatov, *Spring*, 1898–1901

5. Mikhail Larionov, *Garden*, 1907

6. Pavel Kuznetsov, *The Blue Fountain*, 1906–06

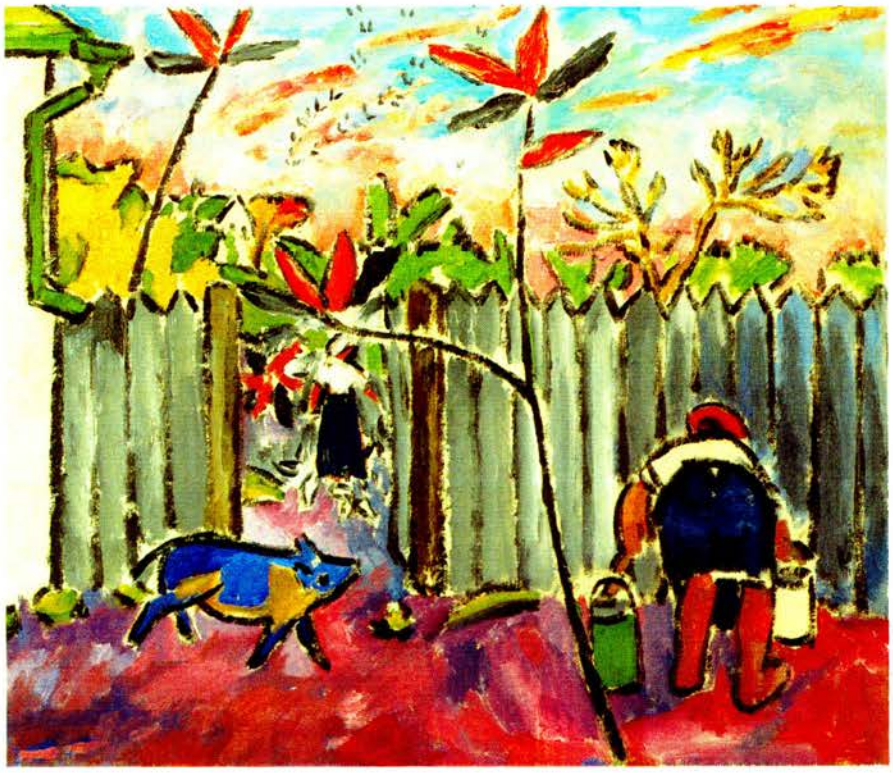
7. Mikhail Larionov, *Rain*, 1907–08

8. Pavel Kuznetsov, *Sheep Shearing*, 1910

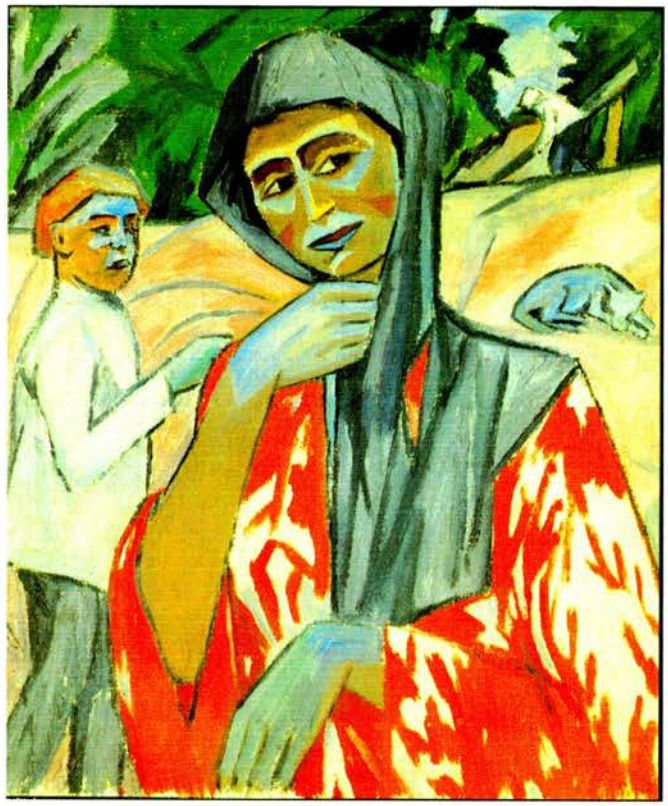
9. Niko Pirosmanashvili, *Easter Carousal*, 1906

10. Moscow School, Parsuna *of Prince Mikhail Skopin-Shuiskii*, early seventeenth century

11. Mikhail Larionov, *Walk in a Provincial Town*, 1909

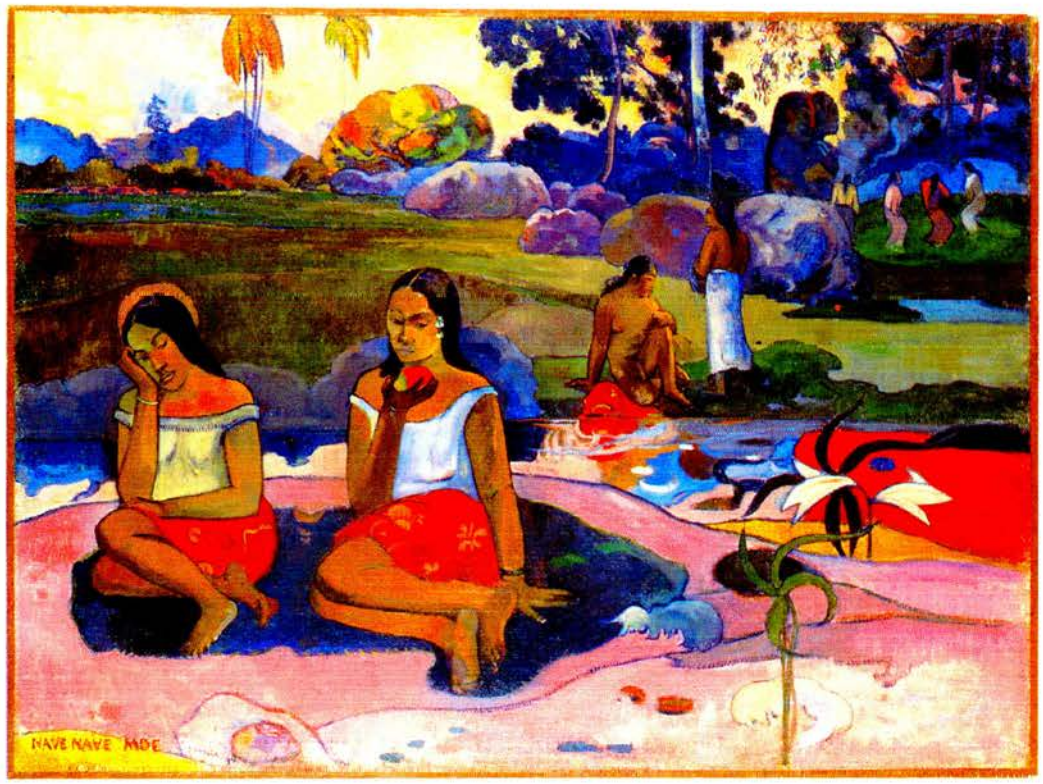


12. Mikhail Larionov, *The Blue Pig*, 1909



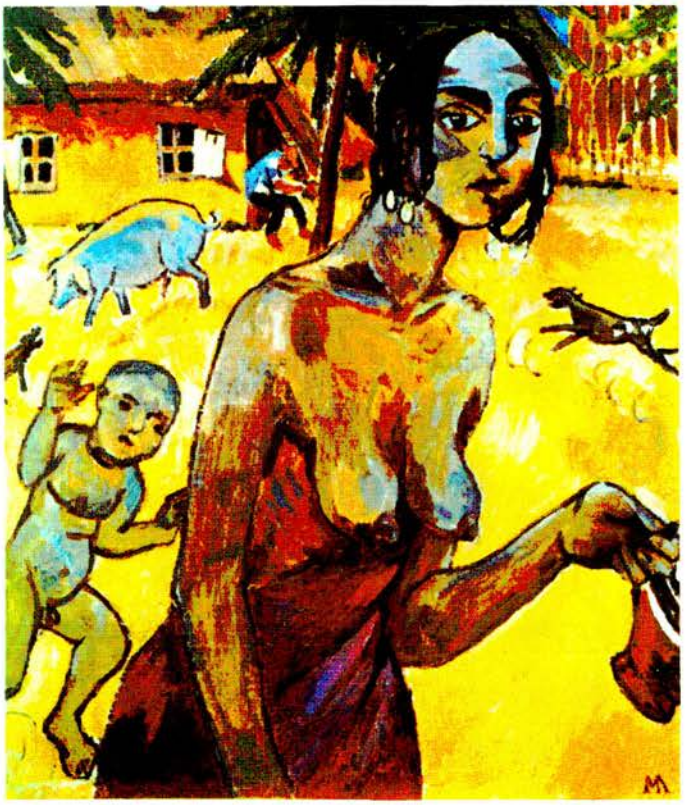
13. Mikhail Larionov, *Woman Passing By*, 1909

14. Paul Gauguin, *Woman with Fruit* [*Eu Haere ia oe*], 1893



15. Paul Gauguin, *Sacred Spring* [*Nave Nave Moe*], 1894

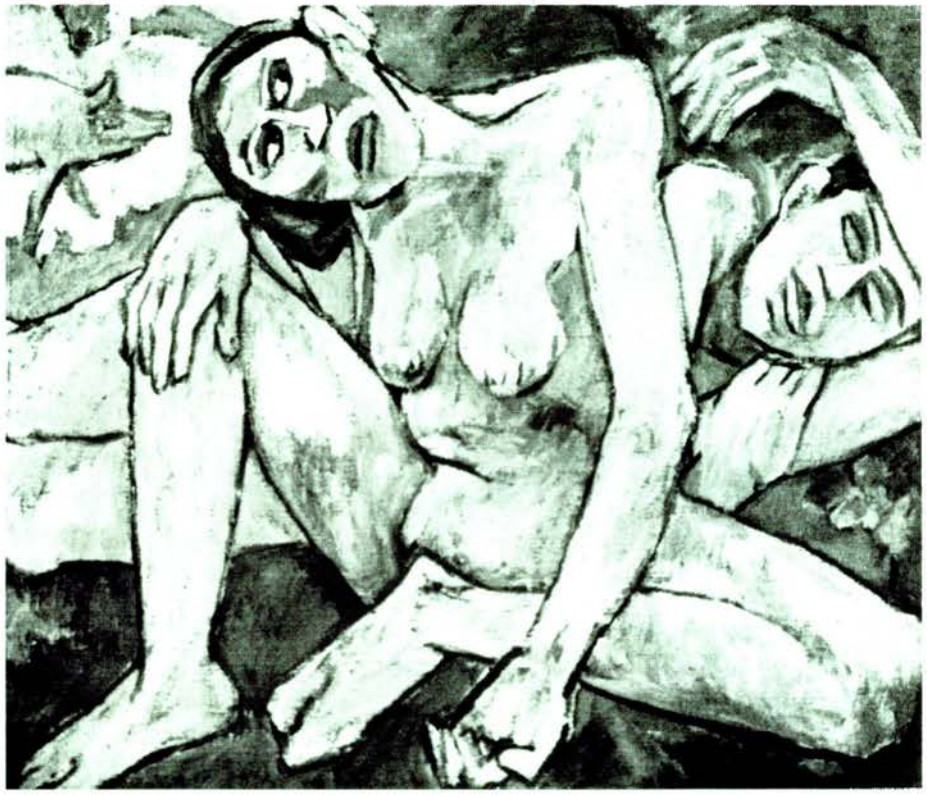
16. Anonymous, *The Virgin Hodegetria of Georgia*, first half of the sixteenth century



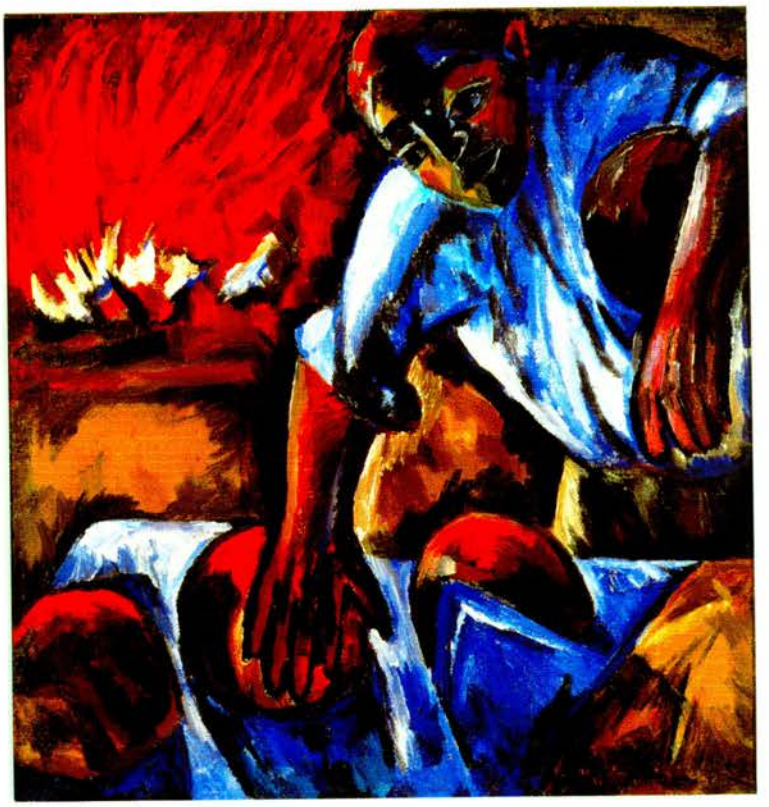
17. Mikhail Larionov, *The Gypsy*, 1909

18. Novgorod School, *Madonna Temderness*, end of fourteenth–beginning of fifteenth century

19. Alexei Venetsianov, *Harvesting: Summer*, before 1827



20. Mikhail Larionov, *Country Bathers*, 1910

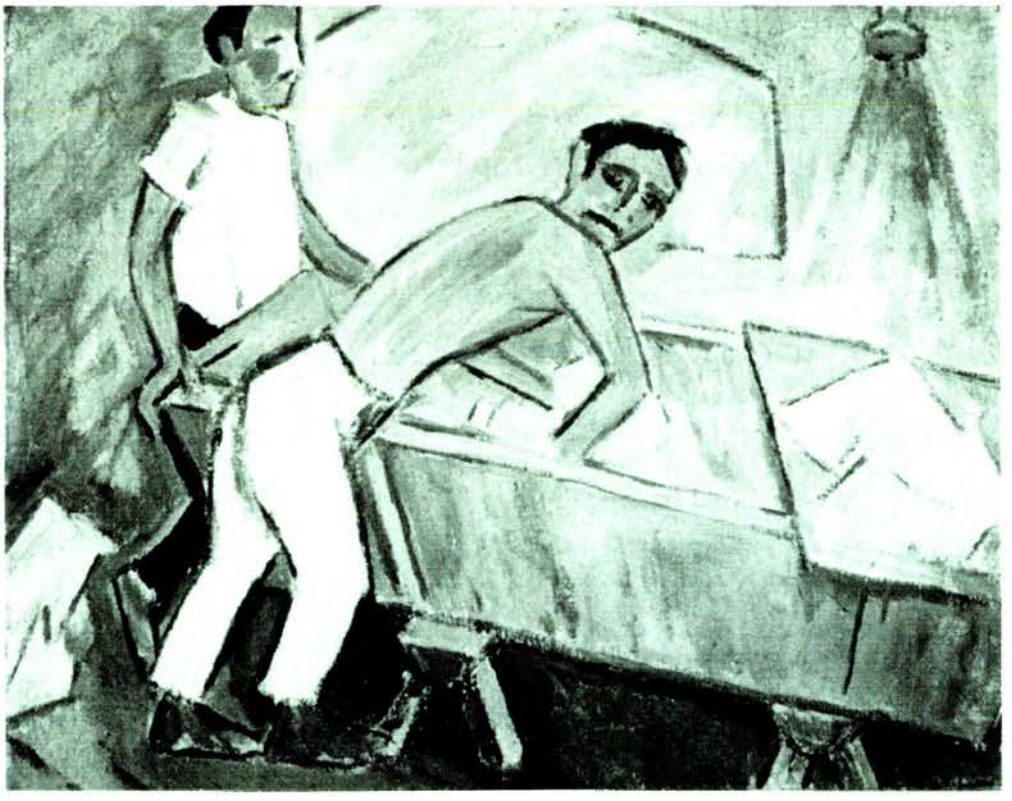


21. Mikhail Larionov, *The Baker*, 1909

22. Mikhail Larionov, *Loaves*, 1910

23. Anonymous, *Bread and Grocery Shop Sign*, first quarter of the twentieth century

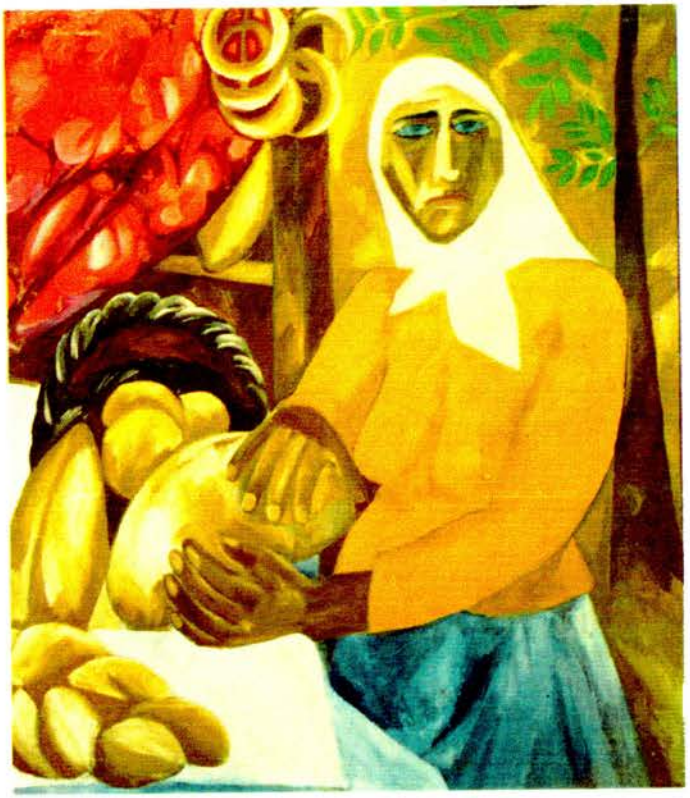
24. Ilia Mashkov, *Loaves*, 1912



25. Mikhail Larionov, *Kneading Dough*, 1909

26. Anonymous, *Preparing Flour, Baking*, sixteenth century

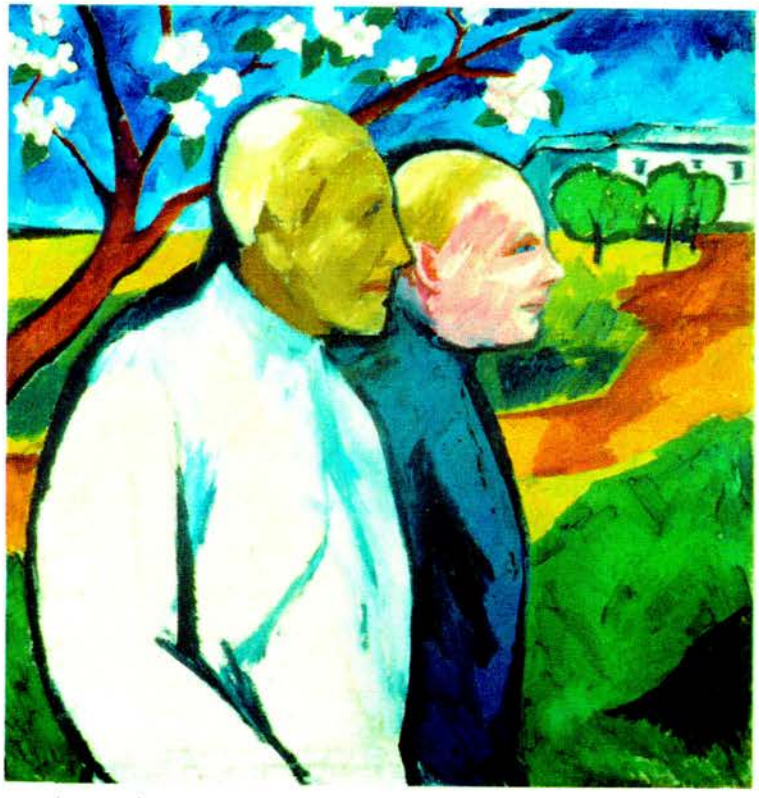
27. Anonymous, *The Pancake Vendor*, 1760s



28. Natalia Goncharova, *The Bread Vendor*, 1911

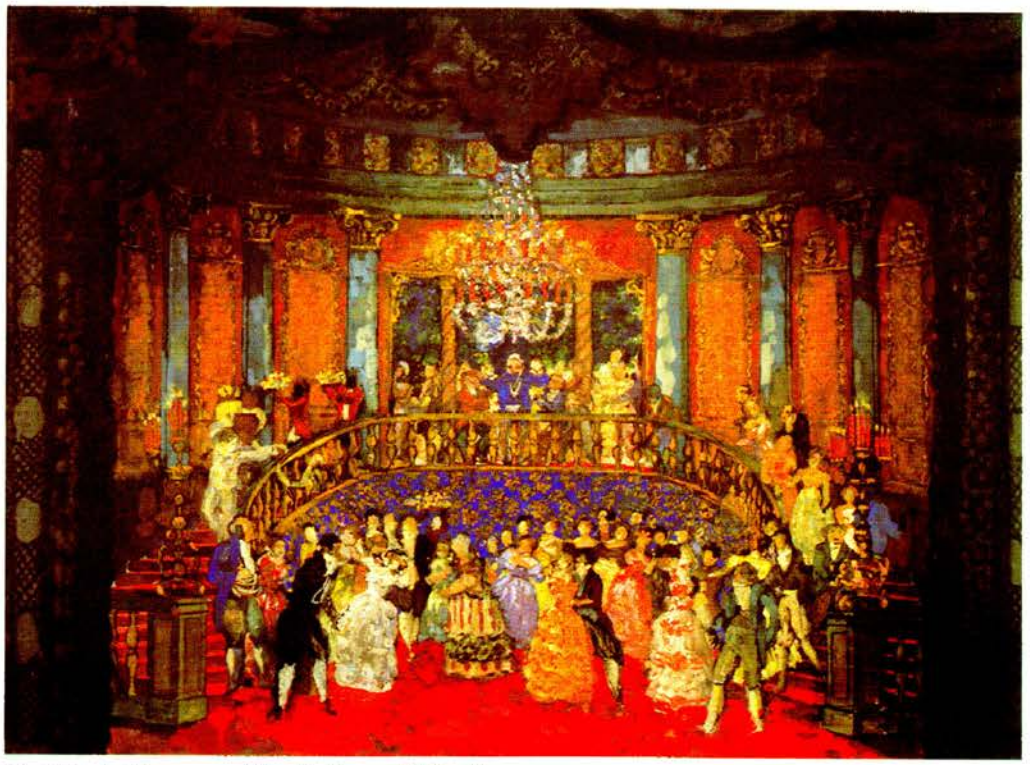
29. Natalia Goncharova, *Still life with Pineapple, ca.* 1908

30. Natalia Goncharova, *Cat with a Tray*, 1910–11

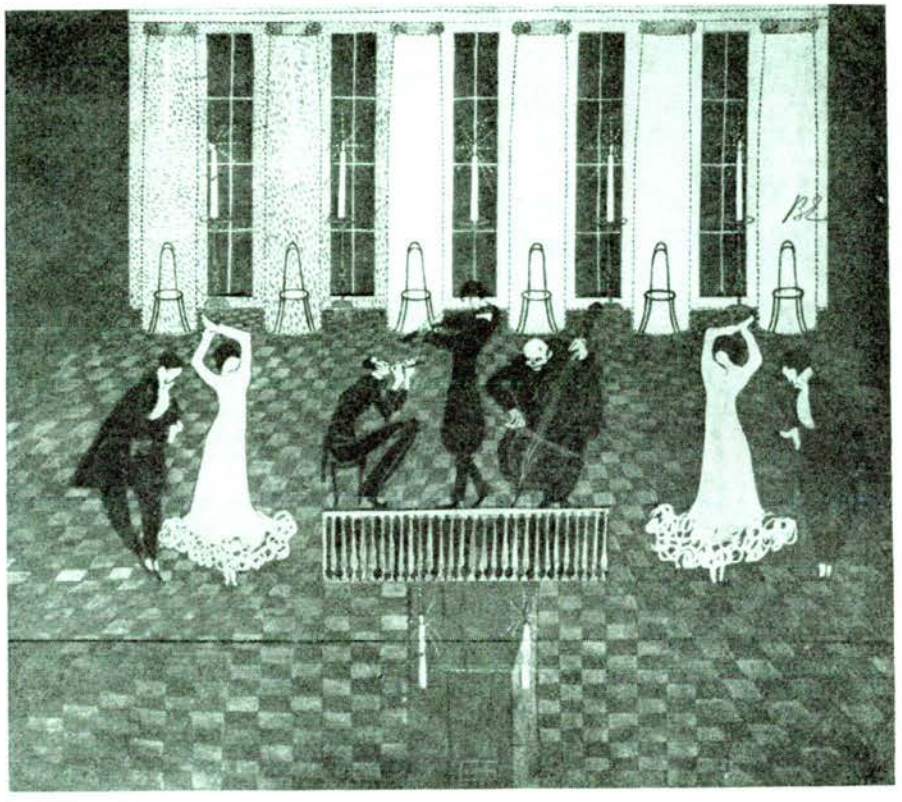


31. Natalia Goncharova, *Portrait of Larionov and His Platoon Commander*, 1911

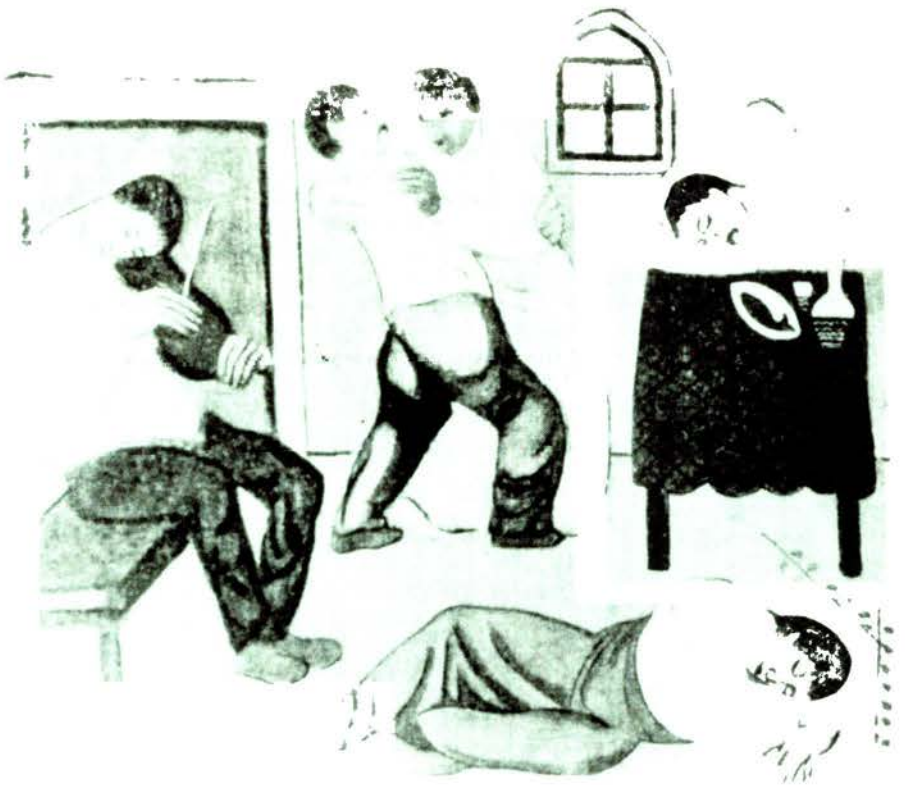
32. Mikhail Larionov, *Dancing*, 1909



33. Nikolai Sapunov, *The Ball*, *ca.* 1907–10

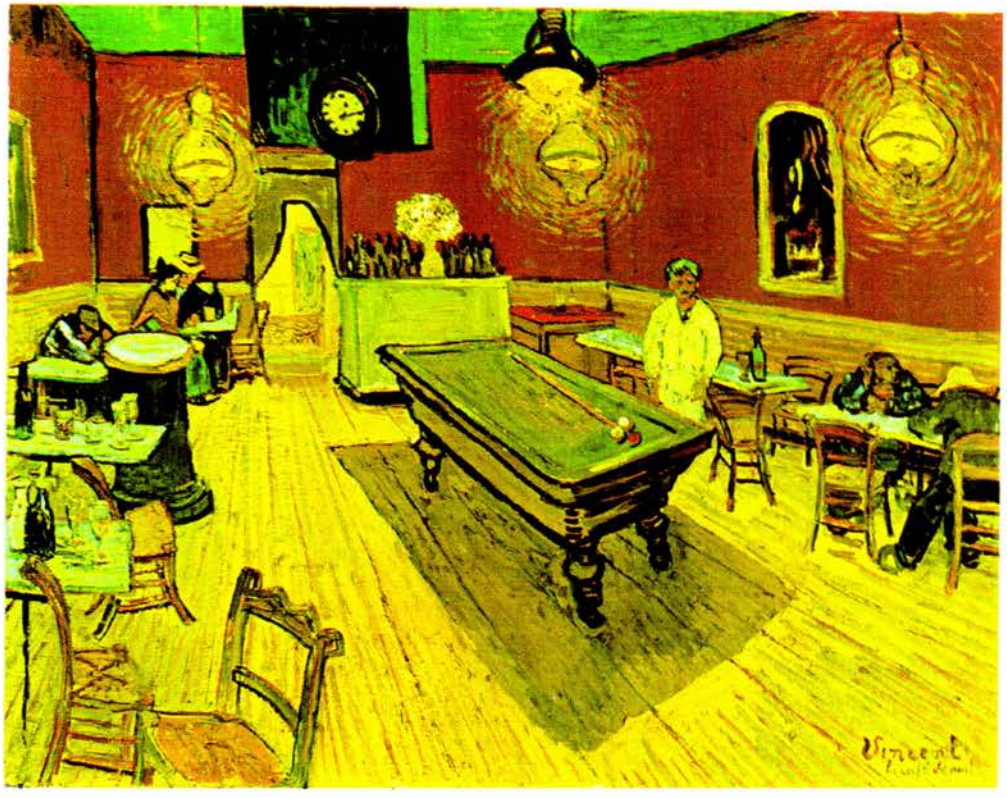


34. Vladimir Egorov, *The Ball*, 1907



35. Sophia Baudouin de Courtenay, *Scene in a Tavern*, *ca.* 1911

36. Mikhail Larionov, *Soldier's Tavern*, 1909–10



37. Vincent van Gogh, *Night Café*, 1888

38. Mikhail Larionov, *Quarrel in a Tavern*, 1911

39. Mikhail Larionov, *Quarrel in a Tavern*, 1911

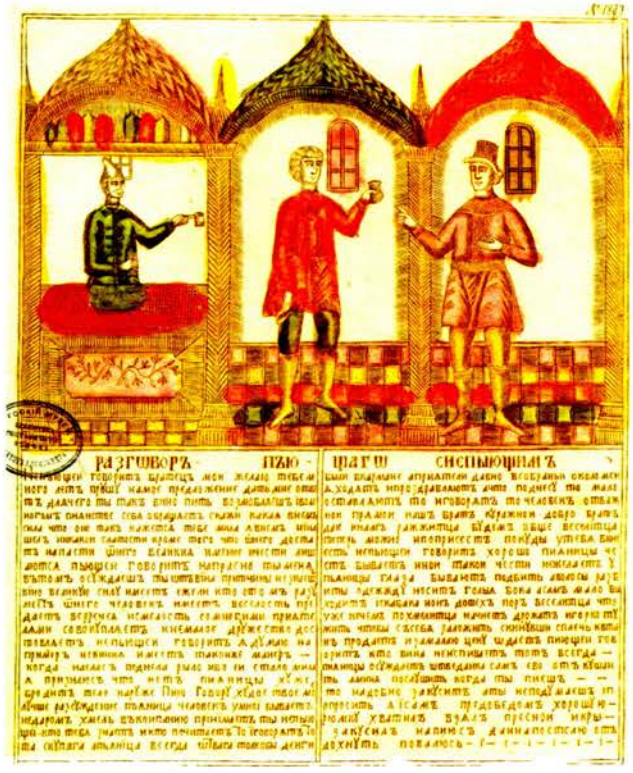
40. Anonymous, *In the Tavern*, mid eighteenth century

41. Anonymous, *Paramoshka and Savoska as Card Players*, 1760s

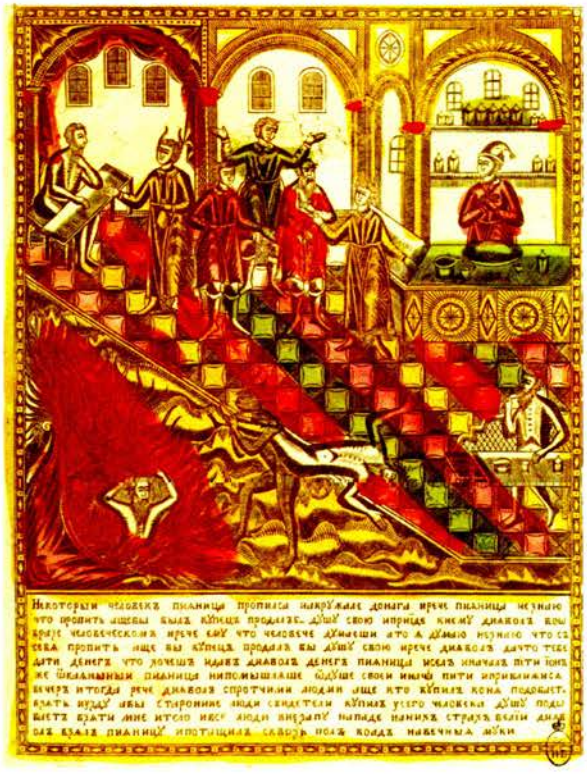
42. Anonymous, *Forma, Paramoshka and Yerioma*, 1760s

43. Anonymous, *Know Thyself, Give Instructions in Your Own House*, eighteenth century

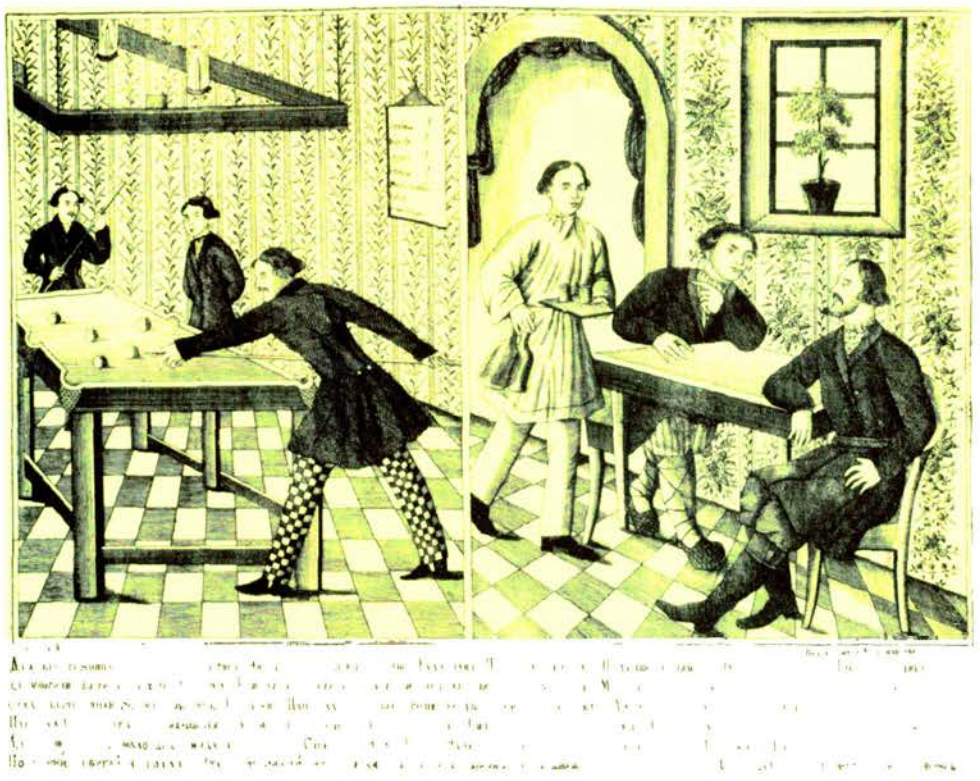
44. Anonymous, *I Am a Hop High Head*, late eighteenth or early nineteenth century



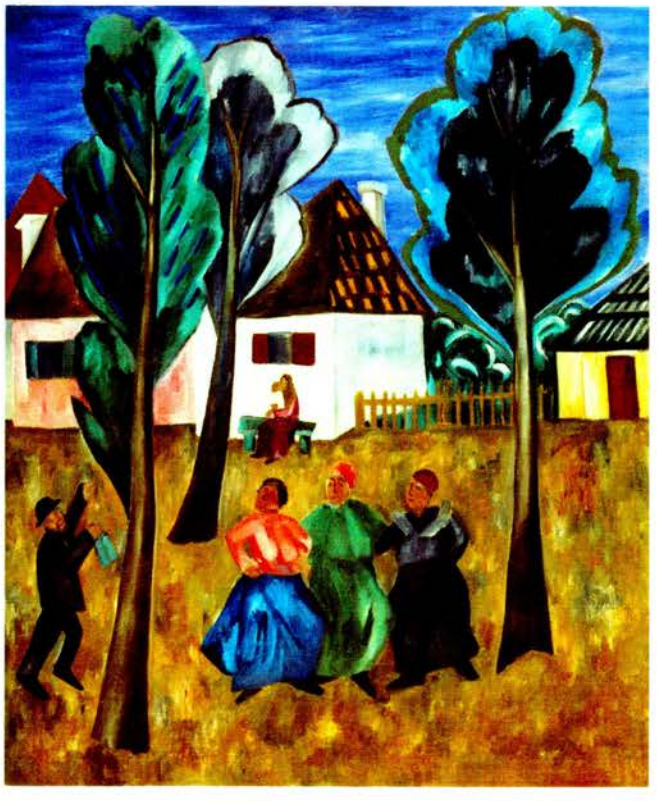
45. Anonymous, *Conversation of a Drinker with a Non-Drinker*, first quarter of the nineteenth century



46. Anonymous, *The Drunkard in the Tavern*, second quarter of the nineteenth century

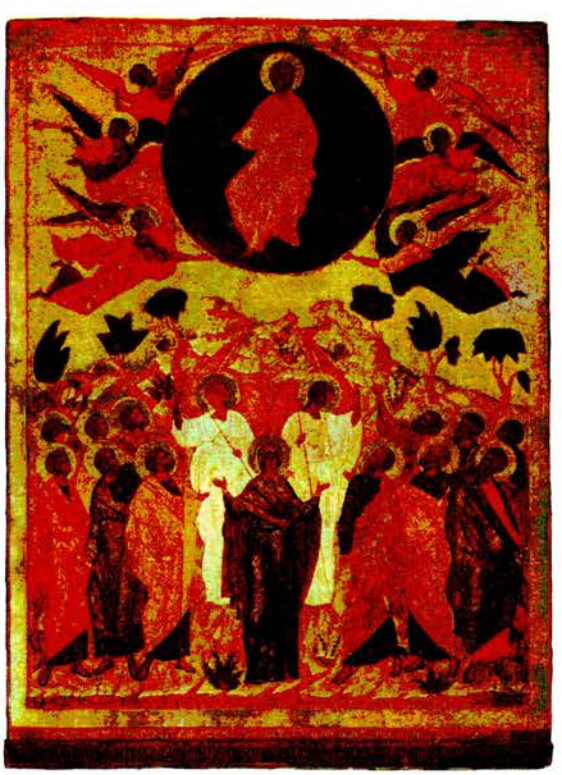


47. Anonymous, *Two Peasants Visiting a Tavern*, 1857



48. Natalia Goncharova. *The Drunks*, 1911

49. Anonymous, *The Barber Wants to Cut the Old Believer's Beard*, first half of the eighteenth century



50. Novgorod School, *The Ascension*, 1542

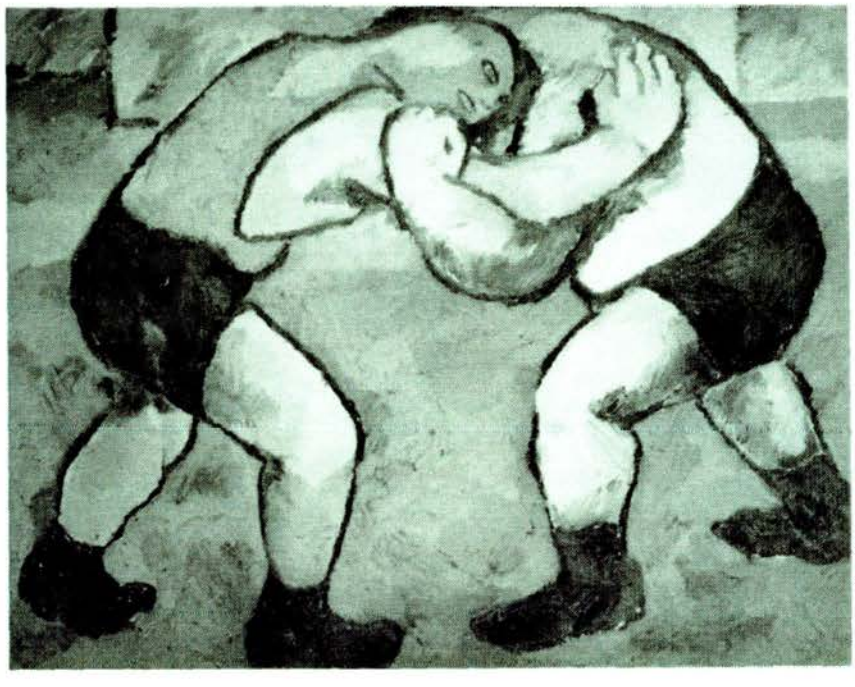
51. Mikhail Larionov, *Circus Dancer Before Her Entrance*, 1911–12

52. Mikhail Larionov, *Prostitute at the Hairdresser's*, *ca.* 1910

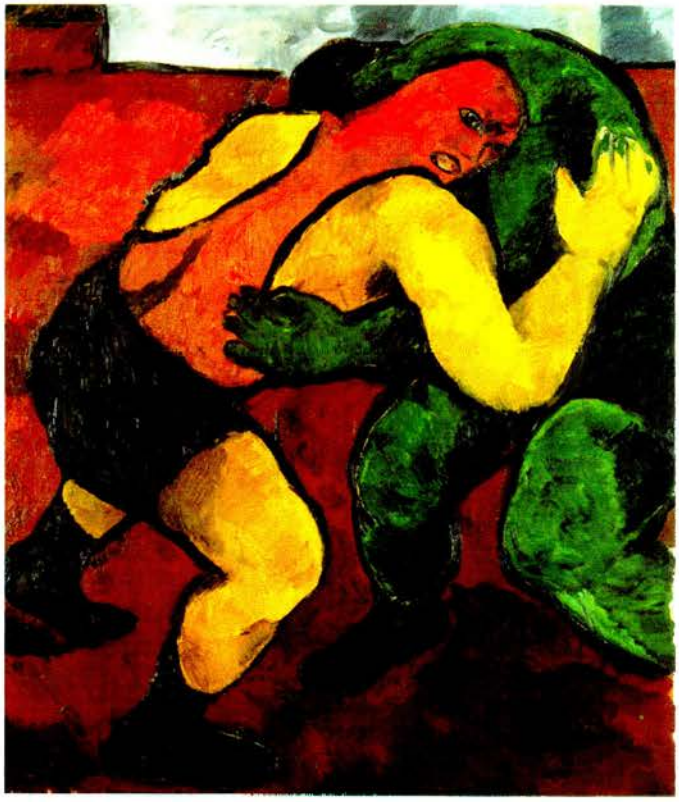
53. Mikhail Larionov, *Woman with a Hat*, *ca.* 1910–12

54. Henri Tolouse-Lautrec, *In the Wings*, 1899

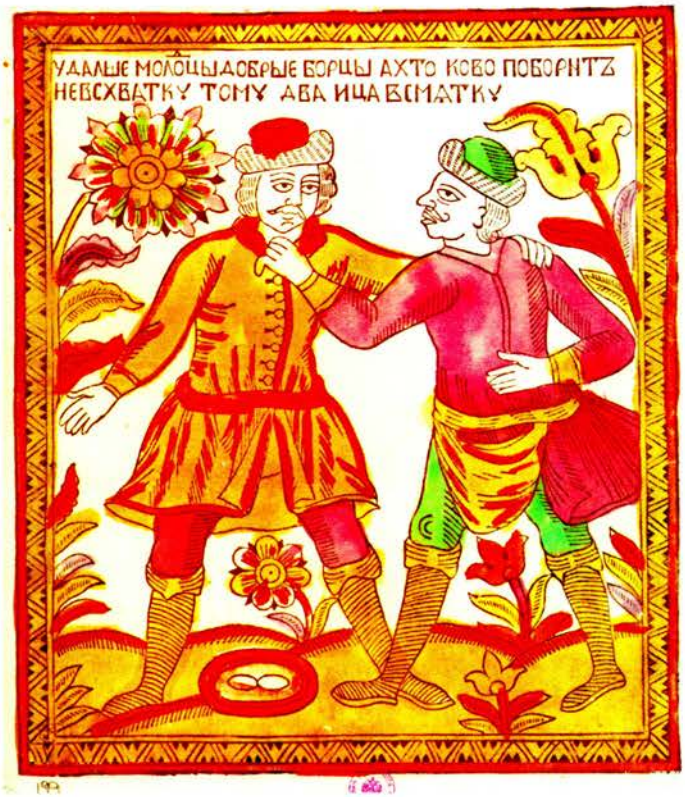
55. Kees van Dongen, *Red Dancer*, 1907–08



56. Natalia Goncharova, *Wrestlers*, 1909–10



57. Natalia Goncharova, *Wrestlers*, 1909–10

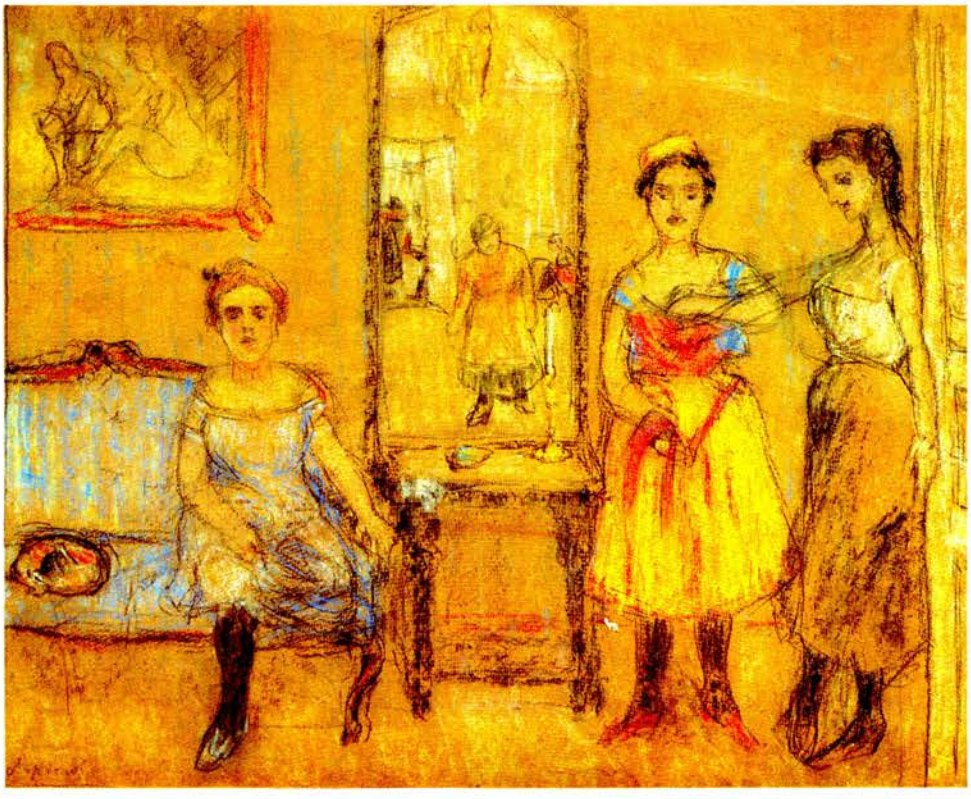


58. Anonymous, *Stout Fellows, Doughty Wrestlers*, mid eighteenth century

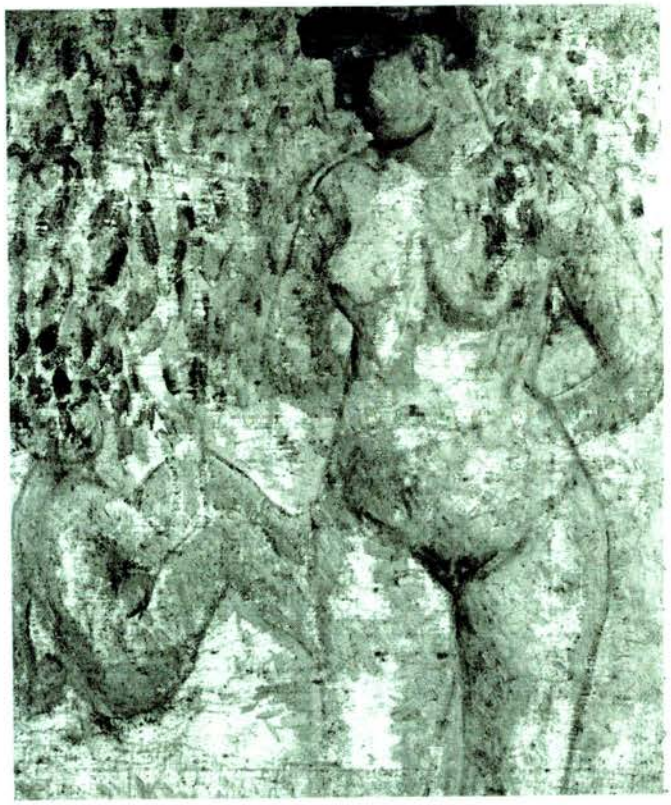
59. Ilia Mashkov, *Self Portrait with Petr Konchalovskii*, 1910

60. Still from *Drama in the Futurists' Cabaret Number 13*, released in 1914

61. Mikhail Larionov, *Scene – The Cinema*, 1912

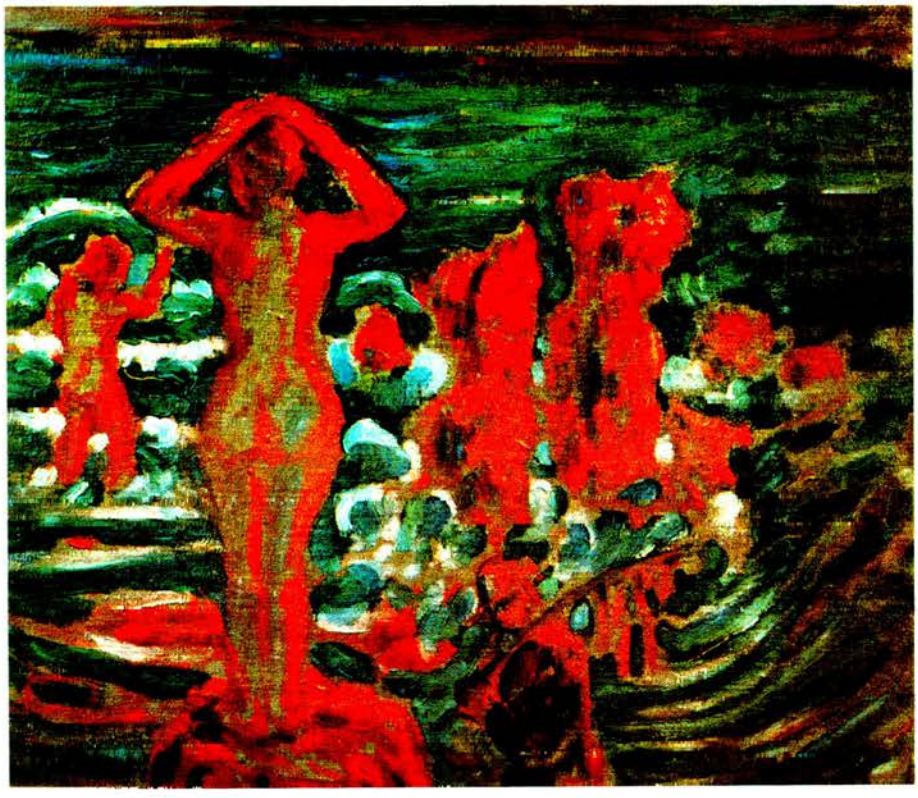


62. Mikhail Larionov, *Women*, late 1890s

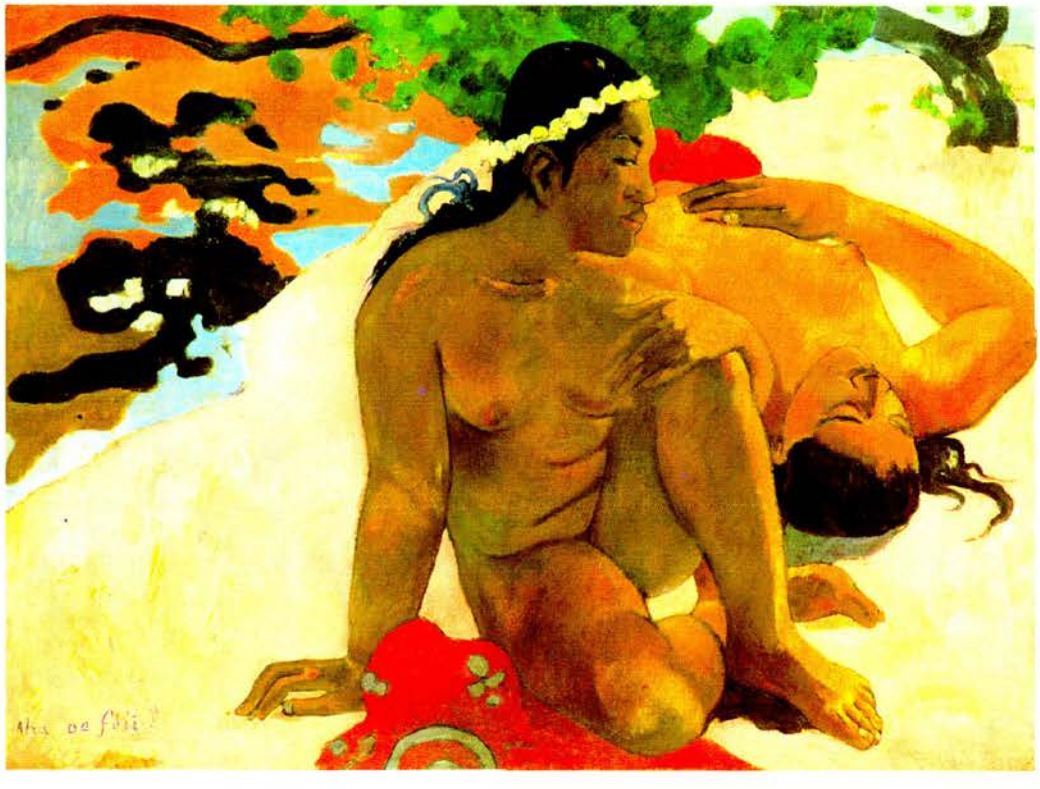


63. Mikhail Larionov, *Bathers*, *ca.* 1906

64. Mikhail Larionov, *Heads of Bathers (Study)*, 1908

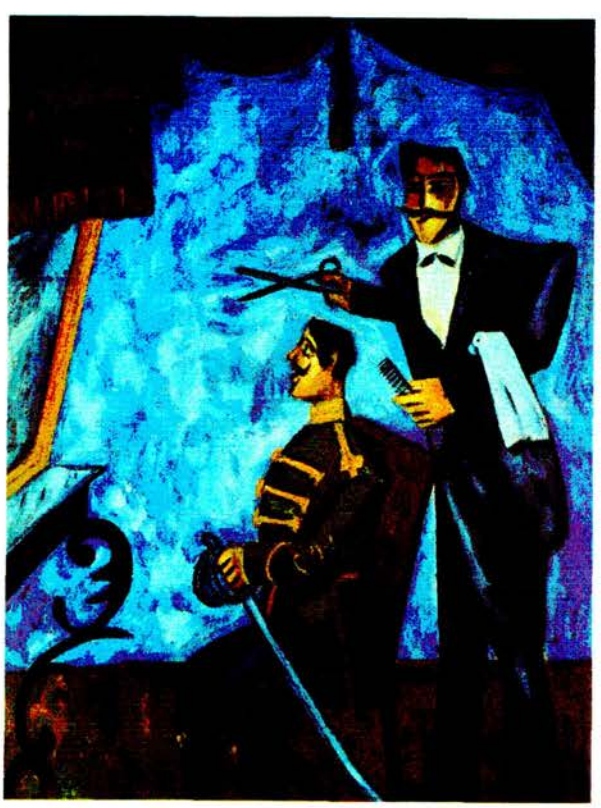


65. Mikhail Larionov, *Bathers*, 1908



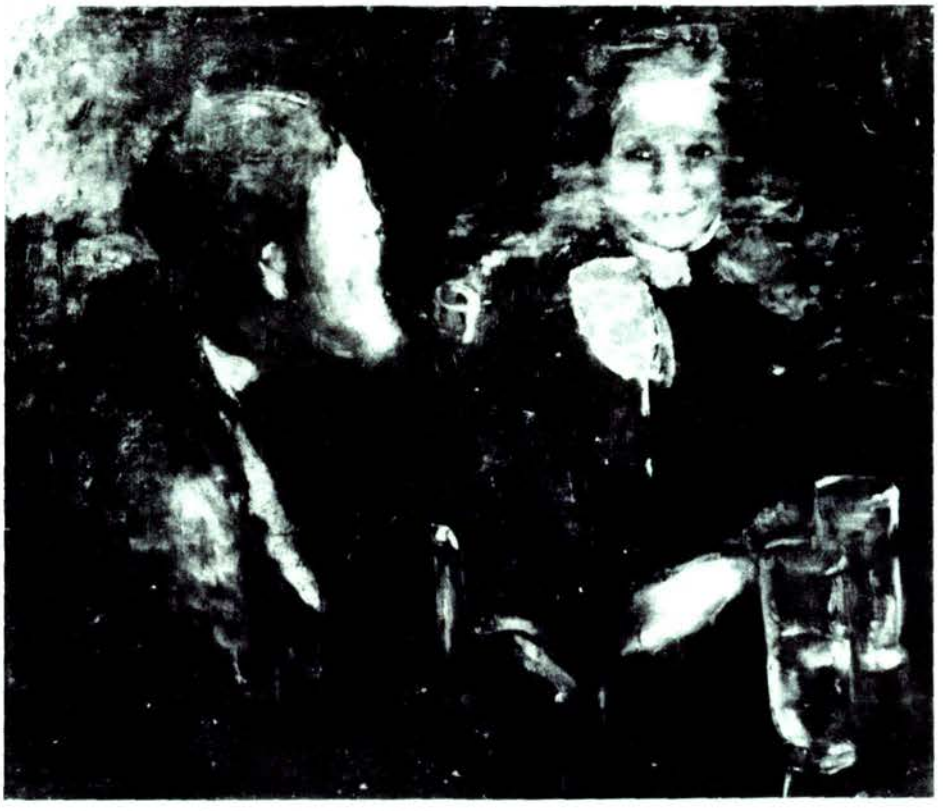
66. Paul Gauguin, *What Are You Jealous?* [*Aha oe Feii?*], 1892

67. Mikhail Larionov, *Ladies' Hairdresser*, 1909–10

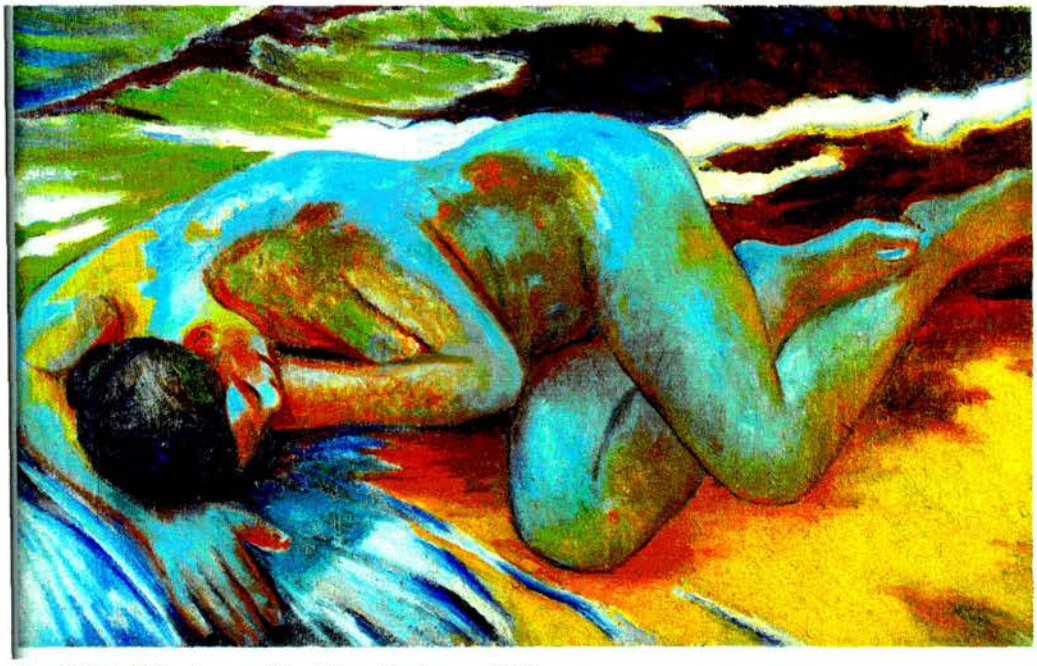


68. Mikhail Larionov, *Officer at the Hairdresser's*, 1909–10

69. Mikhail Larionov, *Sonia the Courtesan*, 1912

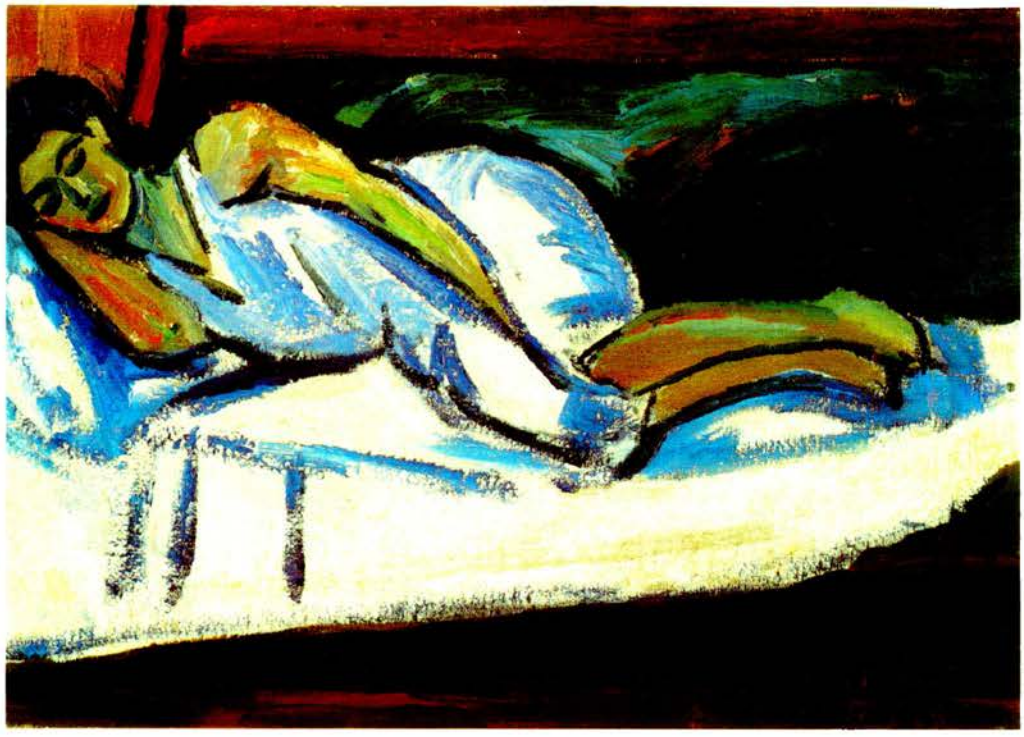


70. Edvard Munch, *Tête-à-Tête*, 1895

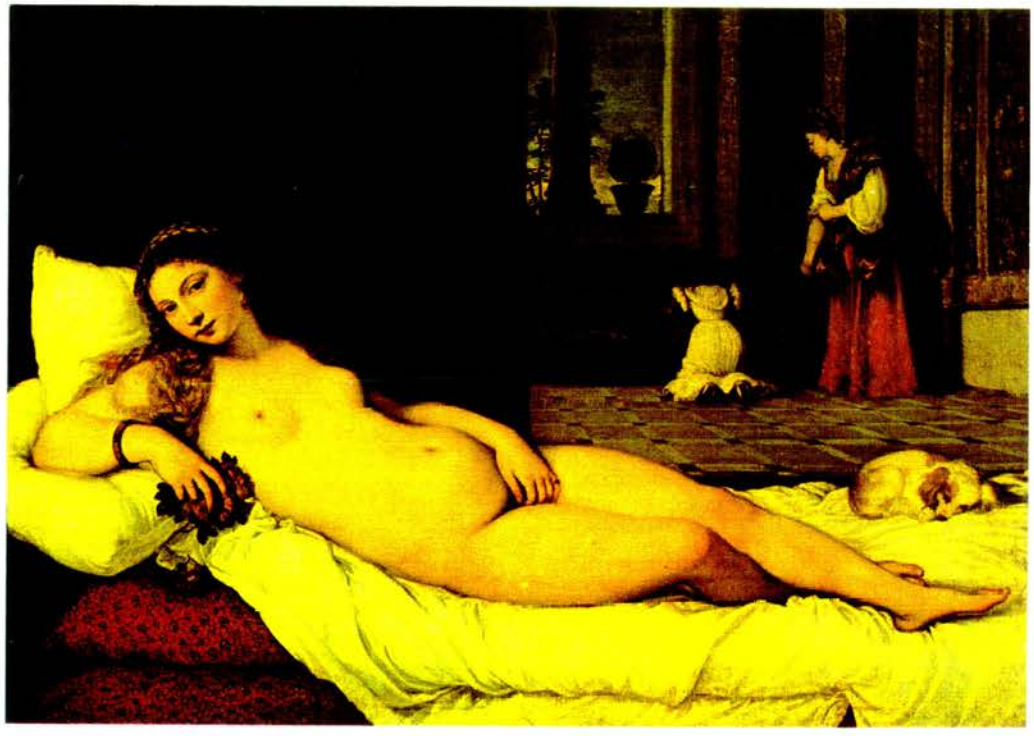


71. Mikhail Larionov, *The Blue Nude*, *ca.* 1908

72. Paul Gauguin, *Alone* [*Otahi*], 1893

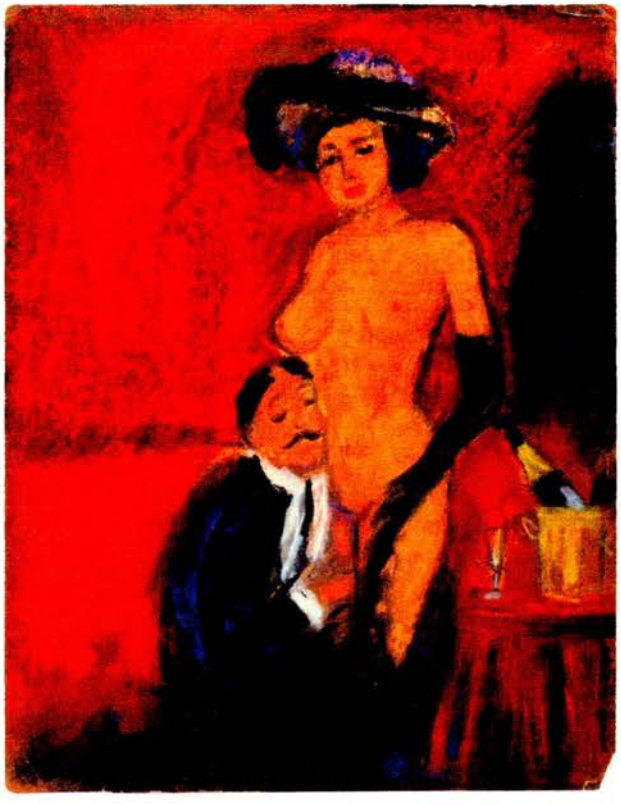


73. Mikhail Larionov, *Portrait of Goncharova*, 1910

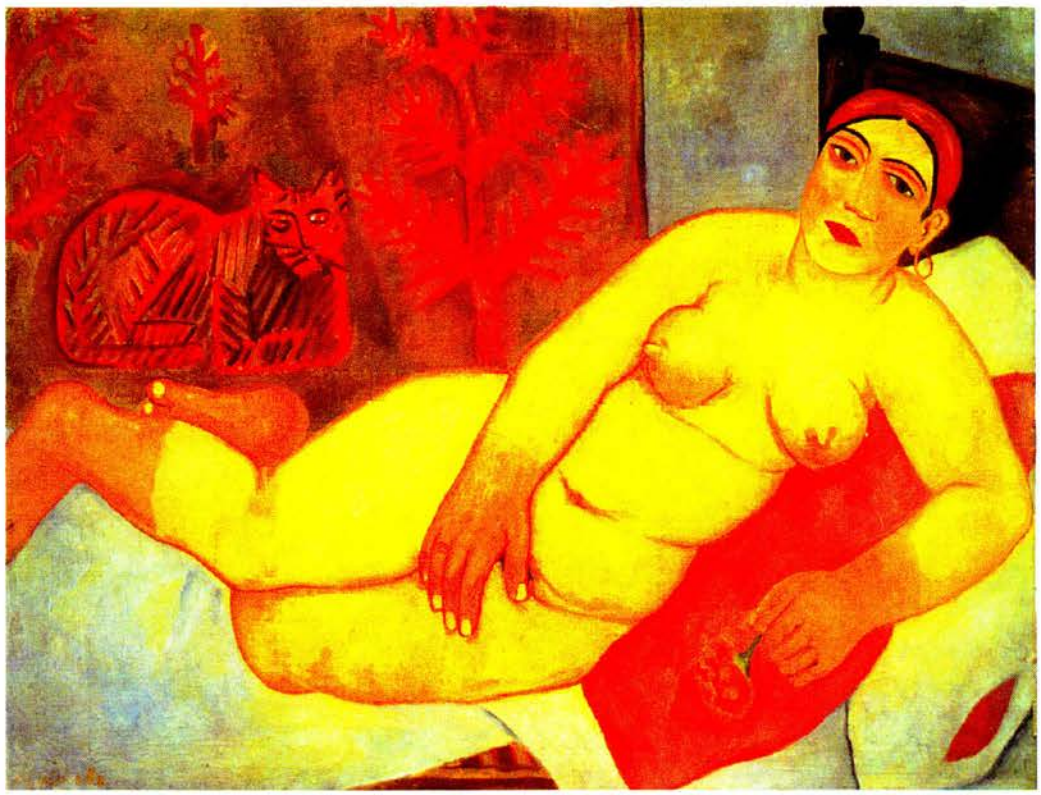


74. Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, 1538

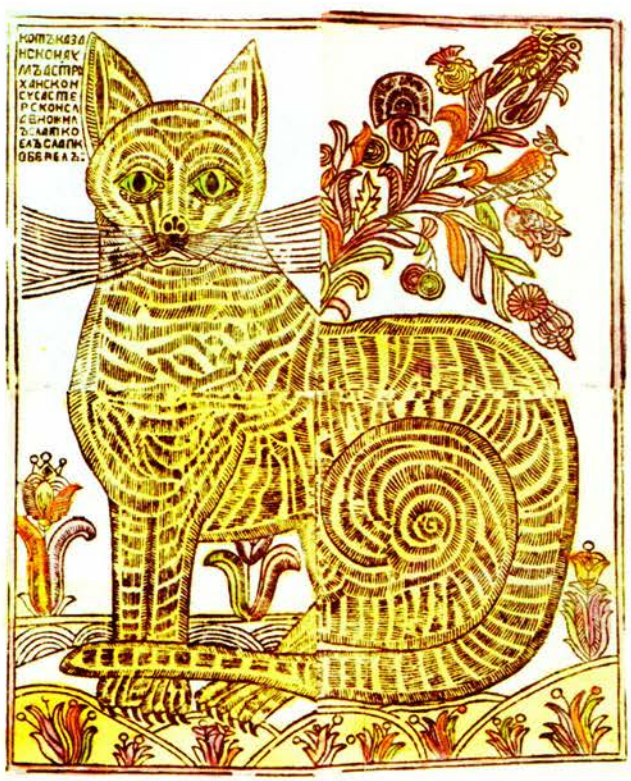
75. Eduard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863



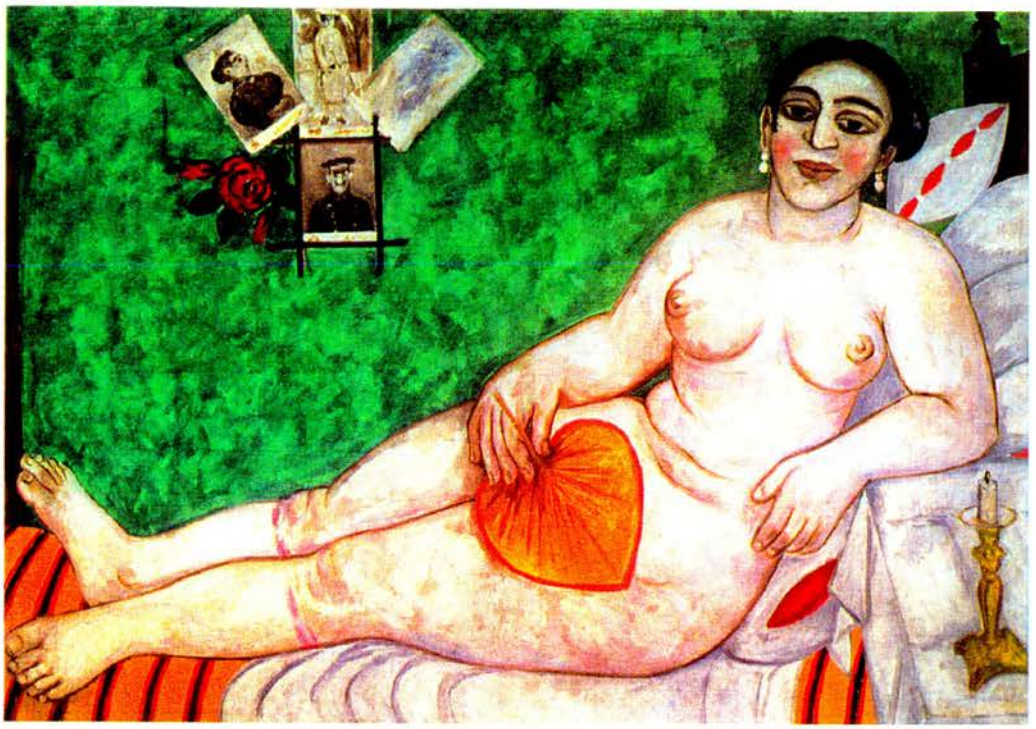
76. Mikhail Larionov, *Adoration*, *ca.* 1909–10



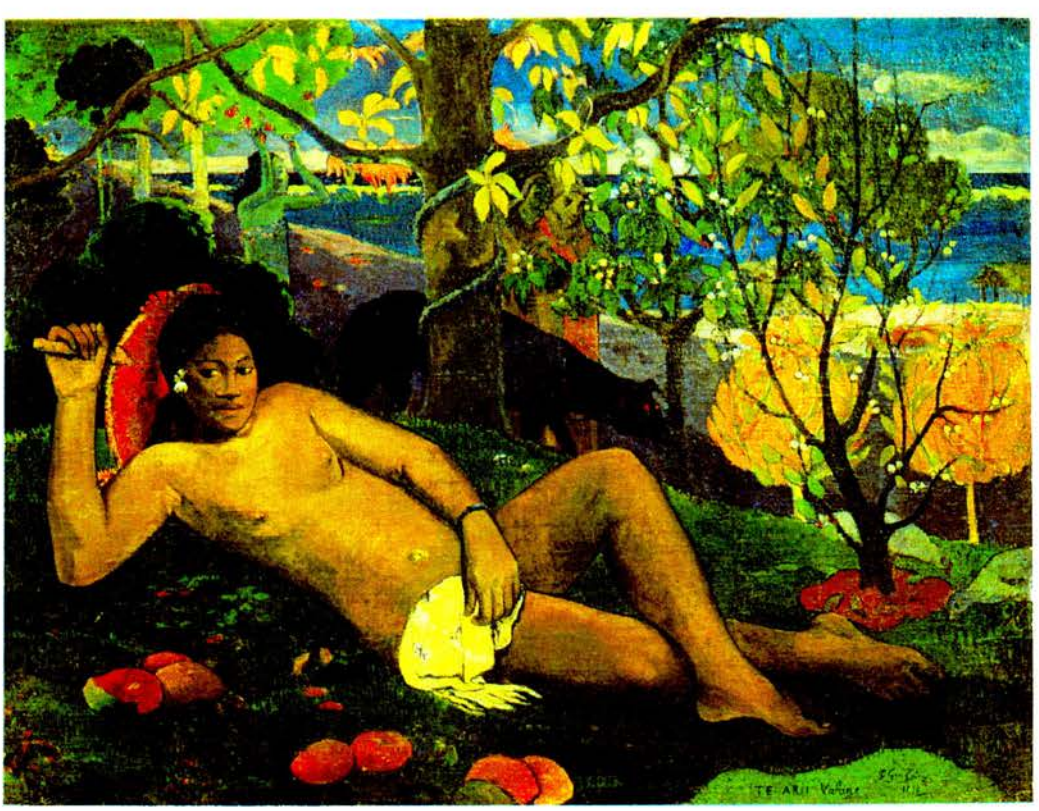
77. Mikhail Larionov, *Katsap Venus*, 1912



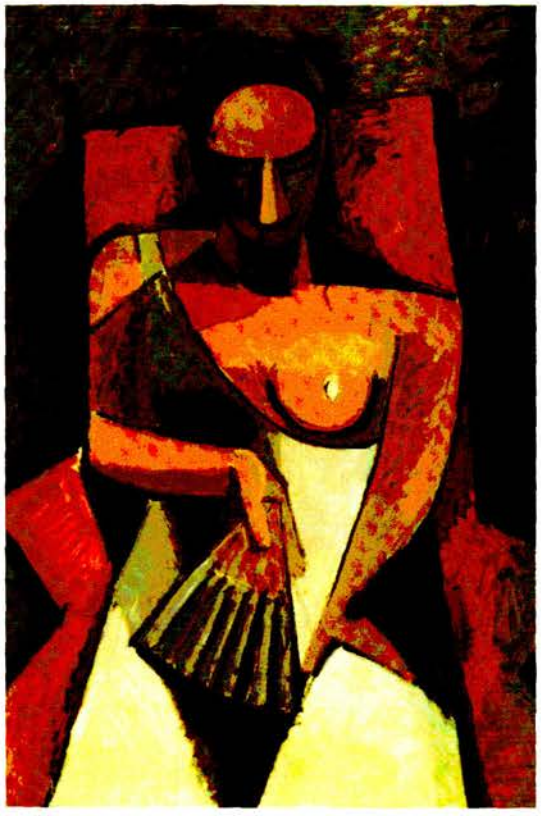
78. Anonymous, *The Kazan Cat*,
first half of the eighteenth century



79. Mikhail Larionov, *Jewish Venus*, 1912

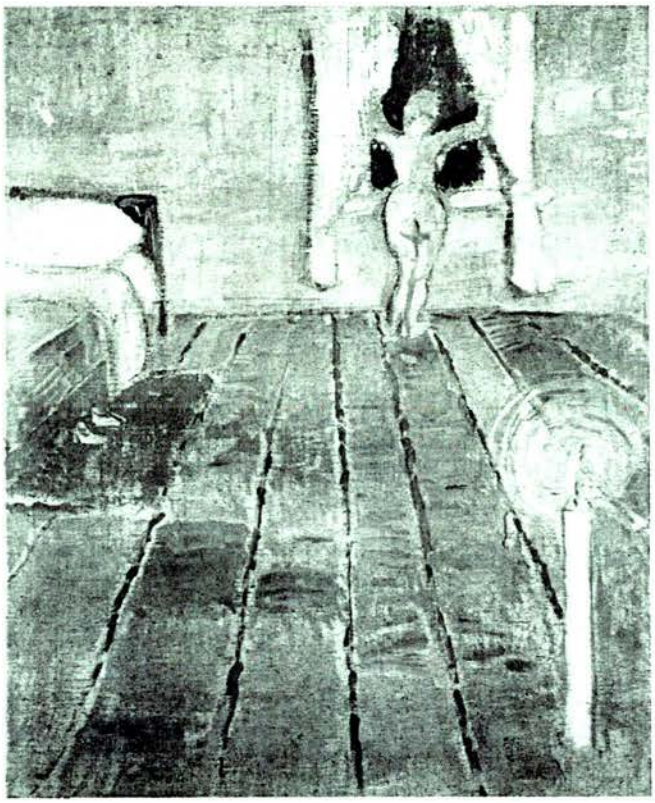


80. Paul Gauguin, *The Queen, The King's Wife*, 1896

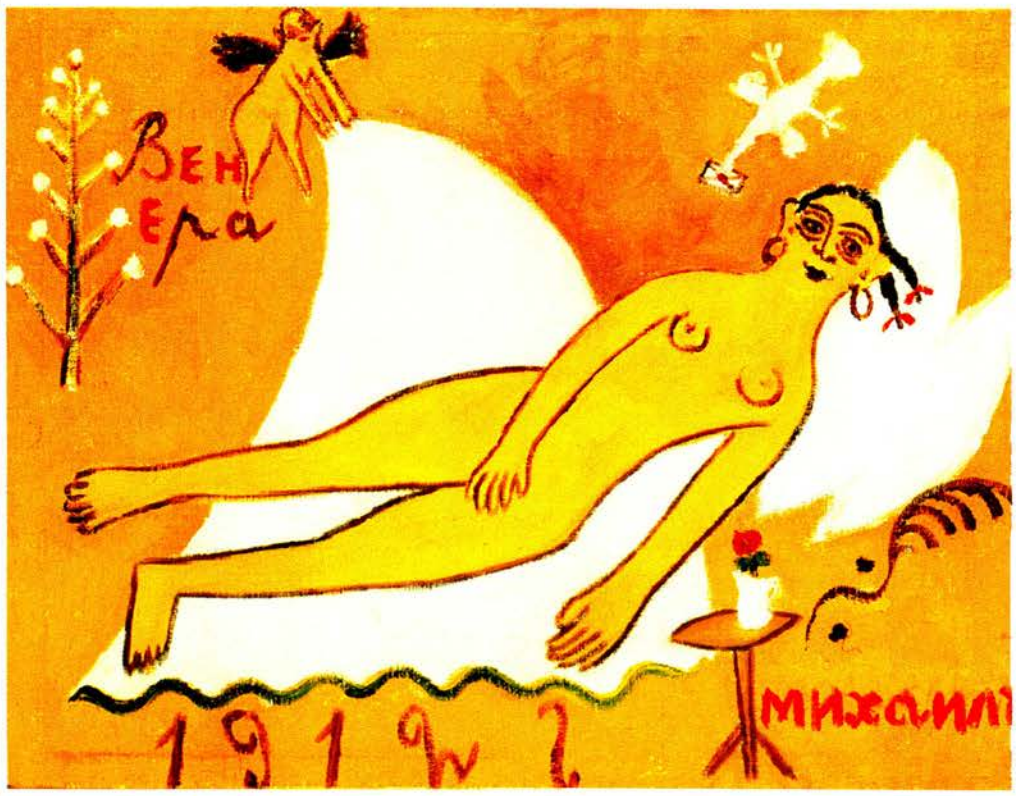


81. Pablo Picasso, *Woman with a Fan (After the Ball)*, 1908

82. Pablo Picasso, *Woman with a Fan*, 1908

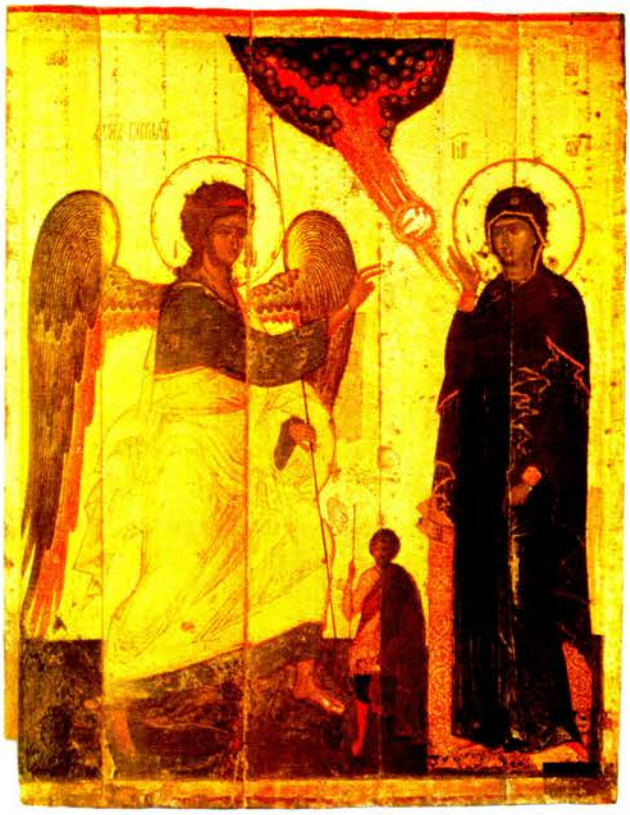


83. Mikhail Larionov, *Morning*, *ca.* 1908–10



84. Mikhail Larionov, *Gypsy Venus*, 1912–1913

85. Mikhail Larionov, Pochoir from *Voyage en Tuquie*, *ca.* 1928

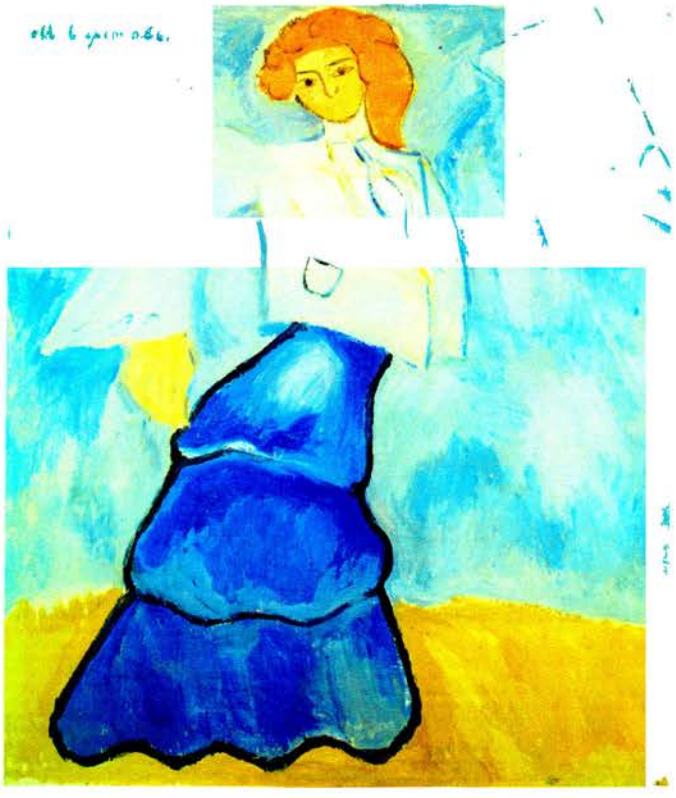


86. Anonymous, *The Annunciation with St. Theodore of Tyron*, second half of the fourteenth century

87. Anonymous, *Alkonost and Siren, the Birds of Paradise*, late eighteenth or early nineteenth century

88. Mikhail Larionov, *Boulevard Vénus*, 1913

89. Mikhail Larionov, *The Waitress*, 1911

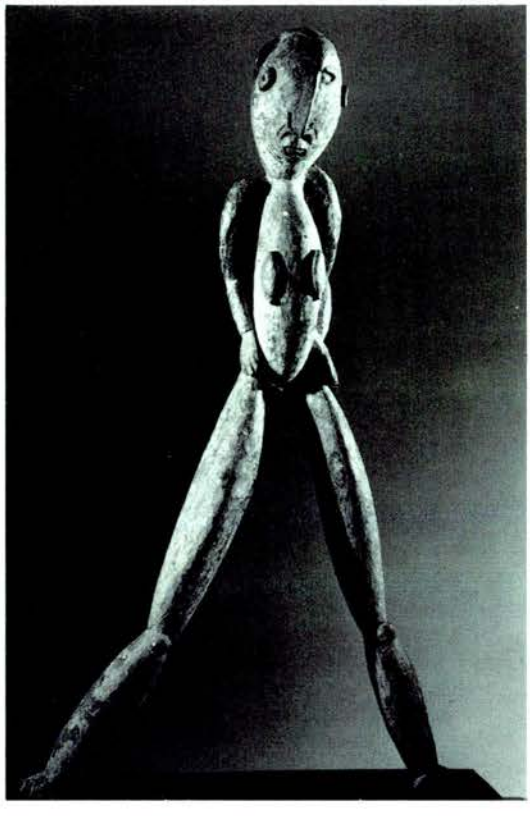


90. Mikhail Larionov, *Provincial Coquette*, 1909

91. Mikhail Larionov, *Mania*, *ca.* 1912

92. Angmasgsalik Eskimo statuette,
early twentieth century

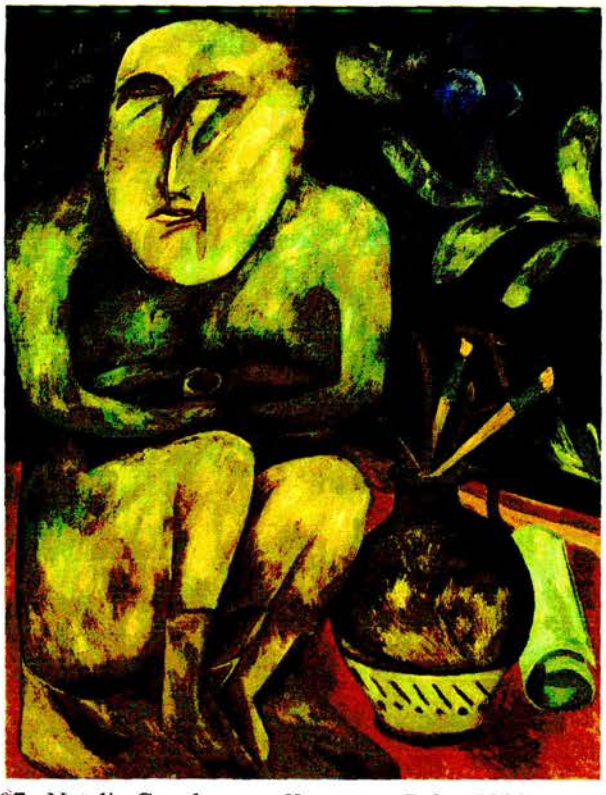
93. Mikhail Larionov, *Mania the Bitch*, pochoir from *Voyage en Turque*, published in 1928



94. Painted Wooden Figure, Abelam Tribe, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea, late nineteenth or early twentieth century

95. Mikhail Larionov, *The Whore*, 1913

96. Mikhail Larionov, *Spring 1912*, 1912



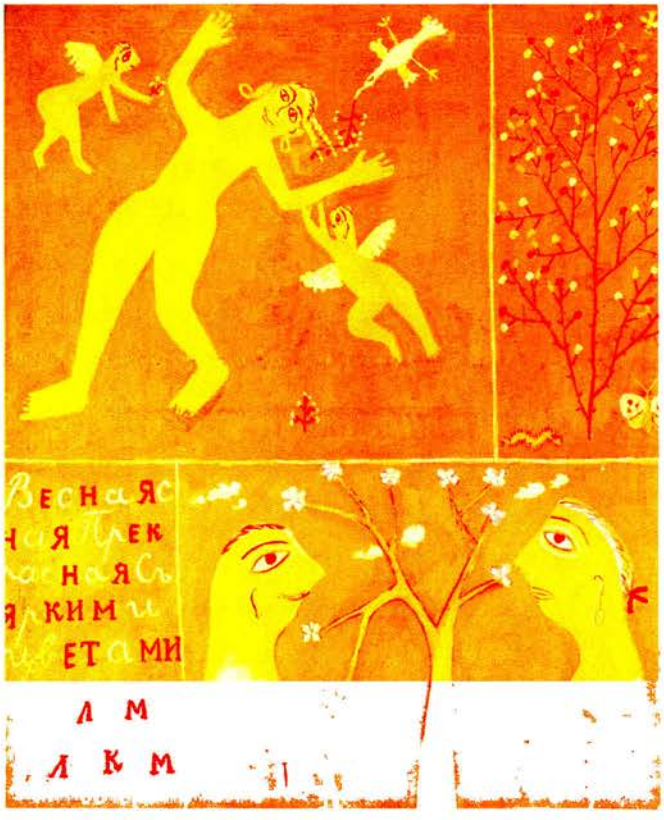
97. Natalia Goncharova, *Kamennia Baba*, 1908

98. Natalia Goncharova, *Pillars of Salt*, 1909

99a. Eskimo amulets

99B. Eskimo amulets

100. Mikhail Larionov, *Happy Autumn*, 1912

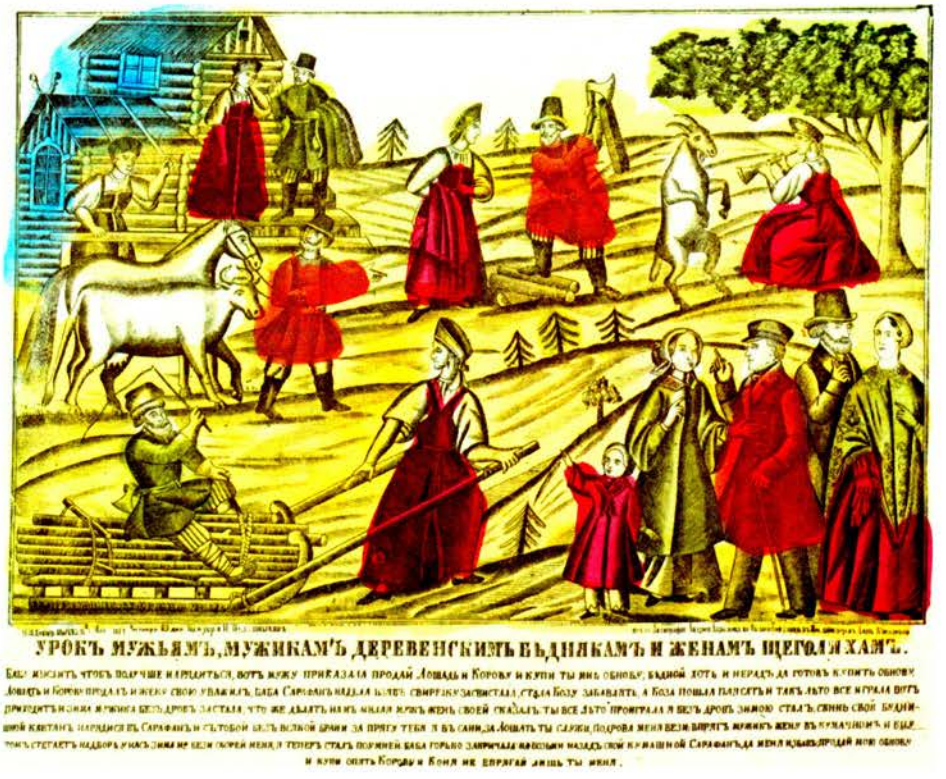


101. Mikhail Larionov, *Seasons: Spring*, 1912

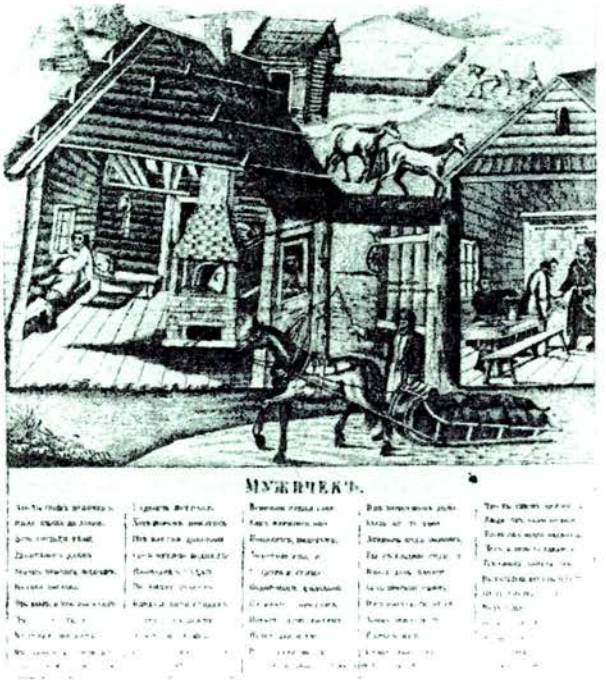
102. Mikhail Larionov, *Seasons: Summer*, 1912

103. Mikhail Larionov, *Seasons: Autumn*, 1912–13

104. Mikhail Larionov, *Seasons: Winter*, 1912–13



105. Anonymous, *A Lesson for Husbands, Poor Peasant Countrymen and Extravagant Wives*, 1874

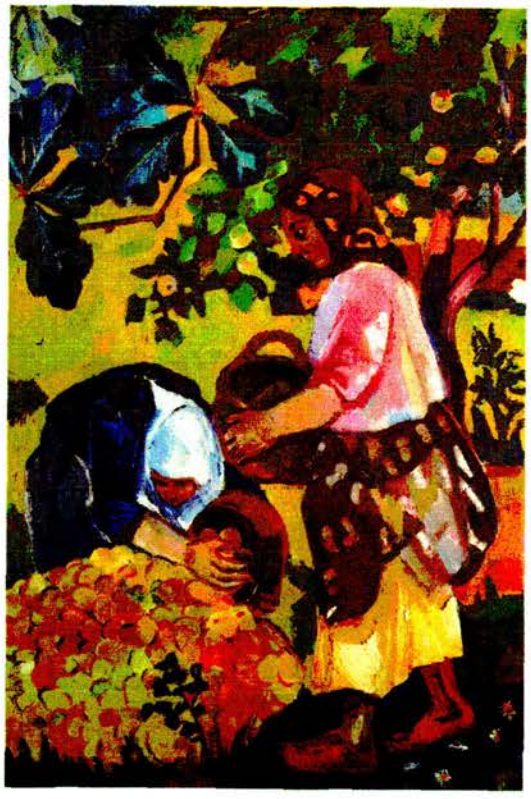


106. Anonymous, *The Peasant* [*Muzhichek*], 1849

107. Natalia Goncharova, *Round Dance* [*Khorovod*], 1911

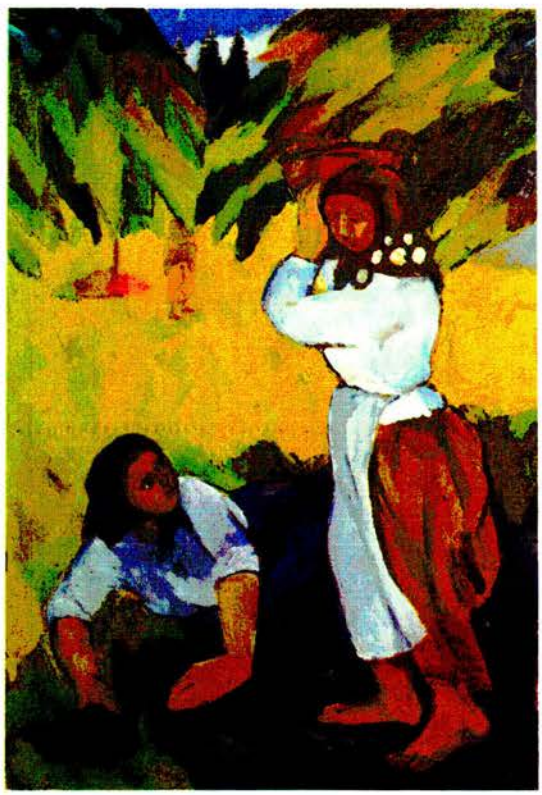
108. Alexei Vanetsianov, *In the Field: Spring*, before 1827

109. Vasilii Maksimov, *Family Division*, 1876



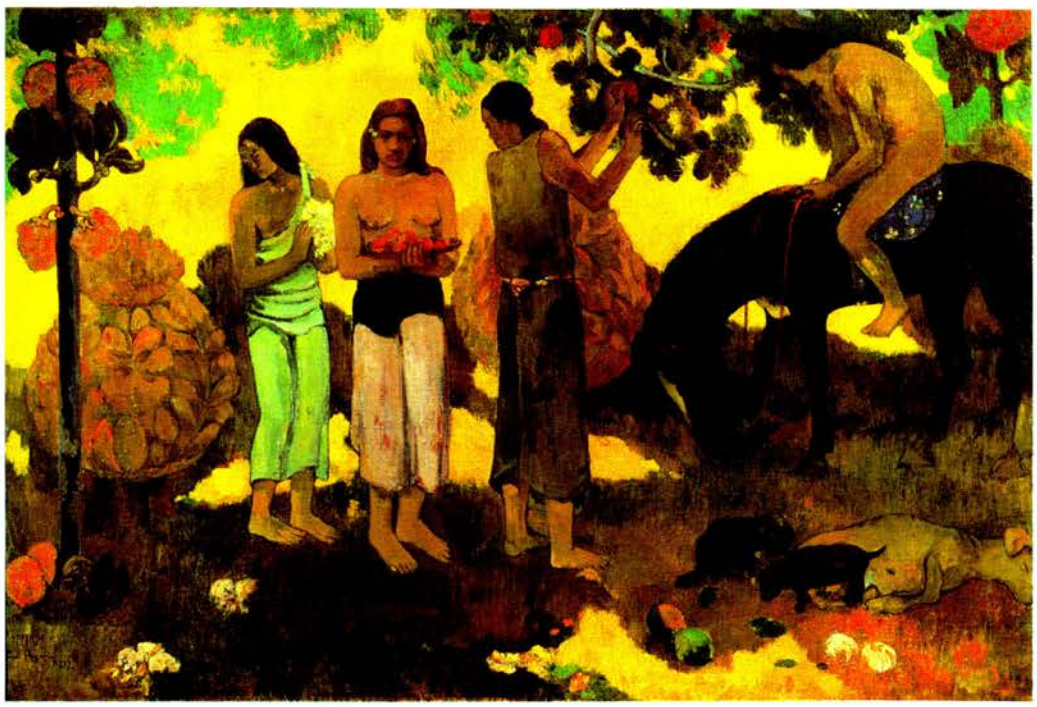
110. Natalia Goncharova,
The Fruit Harvest, 1909

111. Natalia Goncharova, *The Fruit Harvest*, 1909

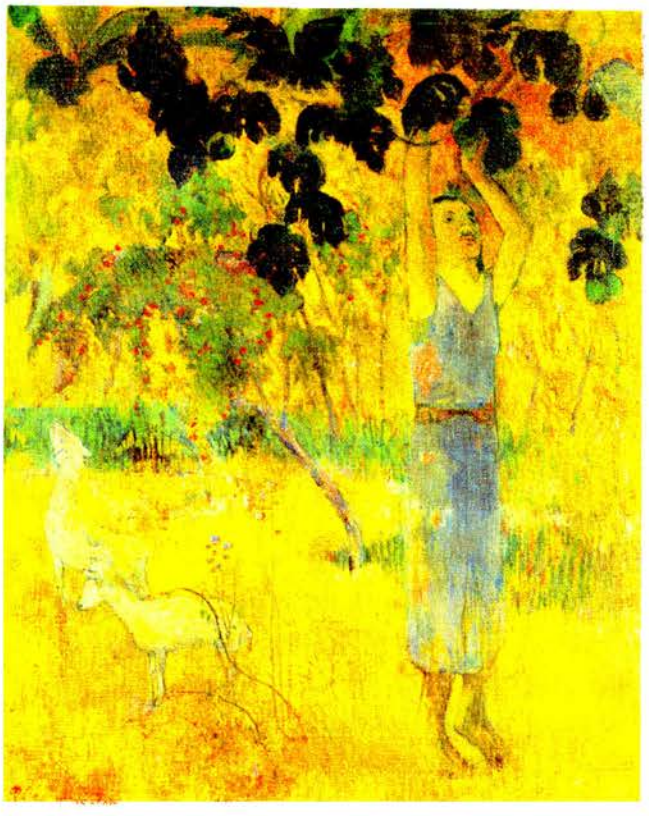


112. Natalia Goncharova, *The Fruit Harvest*, 1909

113. Natalia Goncharova, *The Fruit Harvest*, 1909



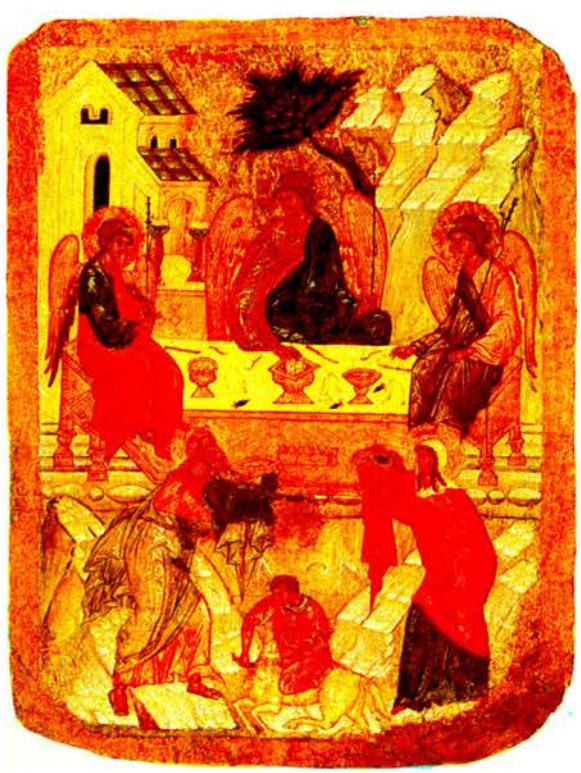
114. Paul Gauguin, *Gathering Fruit* [*Ruperupe*], 1899



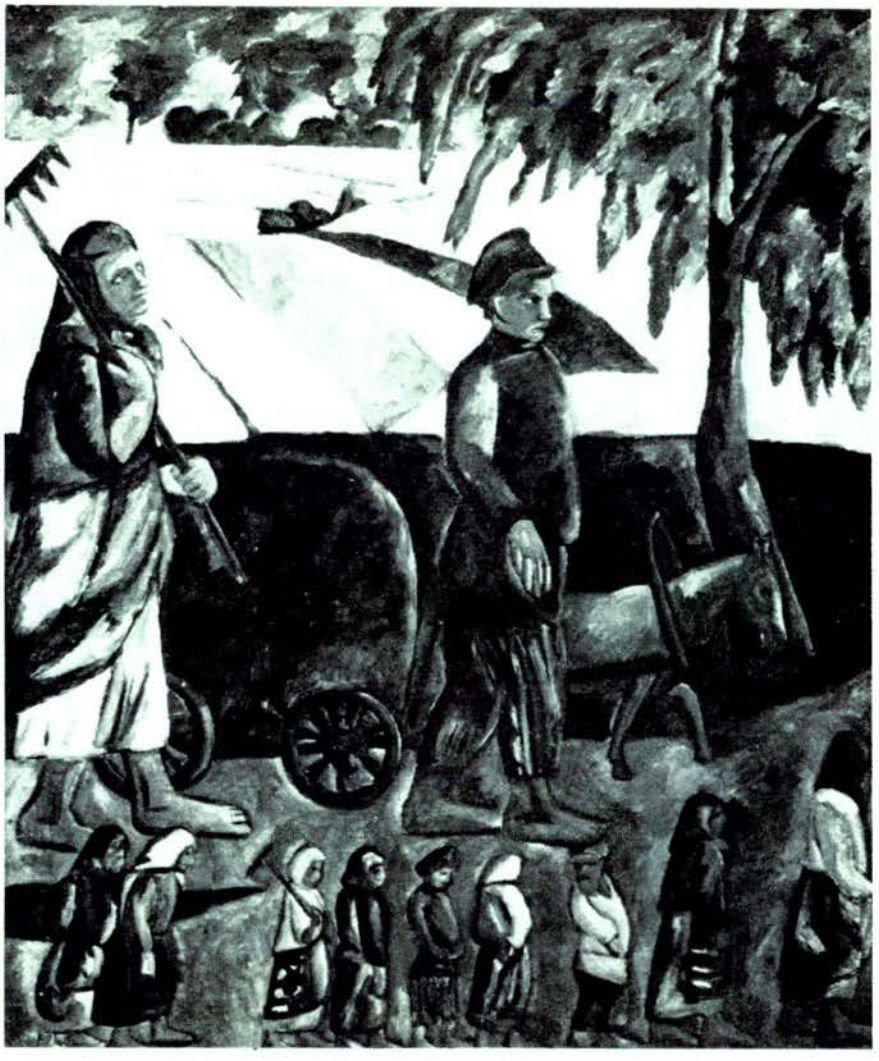
115. Paul Gauguin, *Man Picking Fruit from a Tree*, 1897

116. Paul Gauguin, *The Month of Mary* or *Woman Carrying Flowers* [*Te Avae No Maria*], 1899

117. Natalia Goncharova, *Haycutting*, 1910

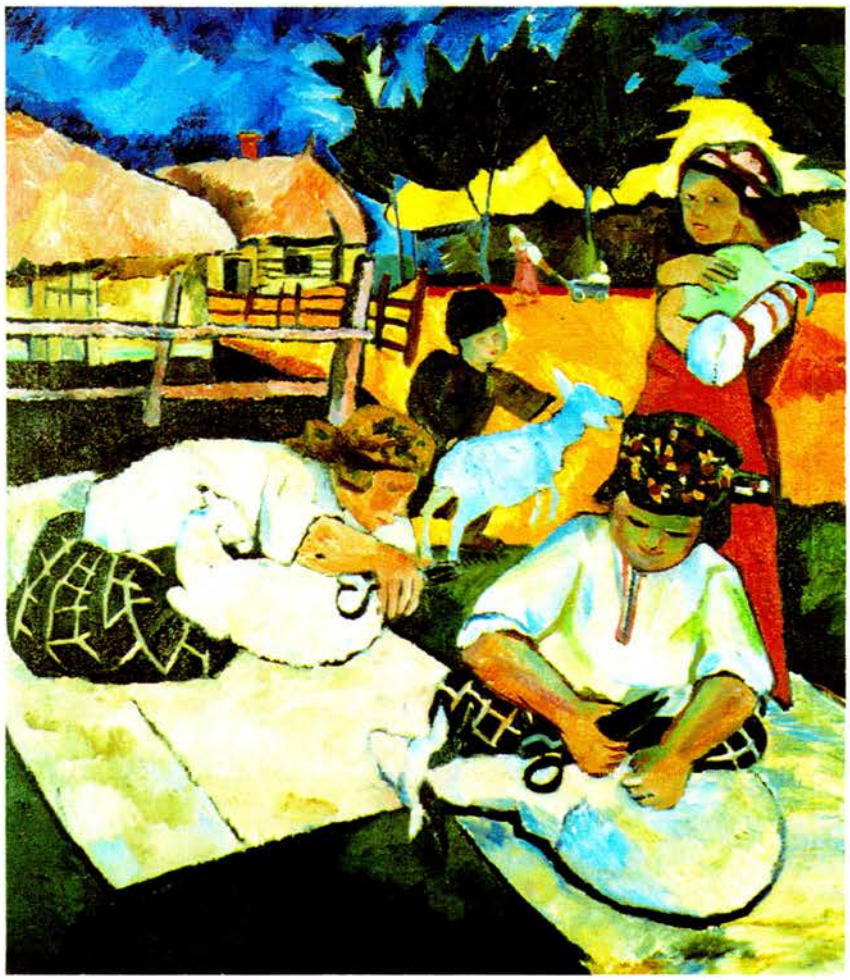


118. Anonymous, *The Old Testament Trinity*, first half of the sixteenth century

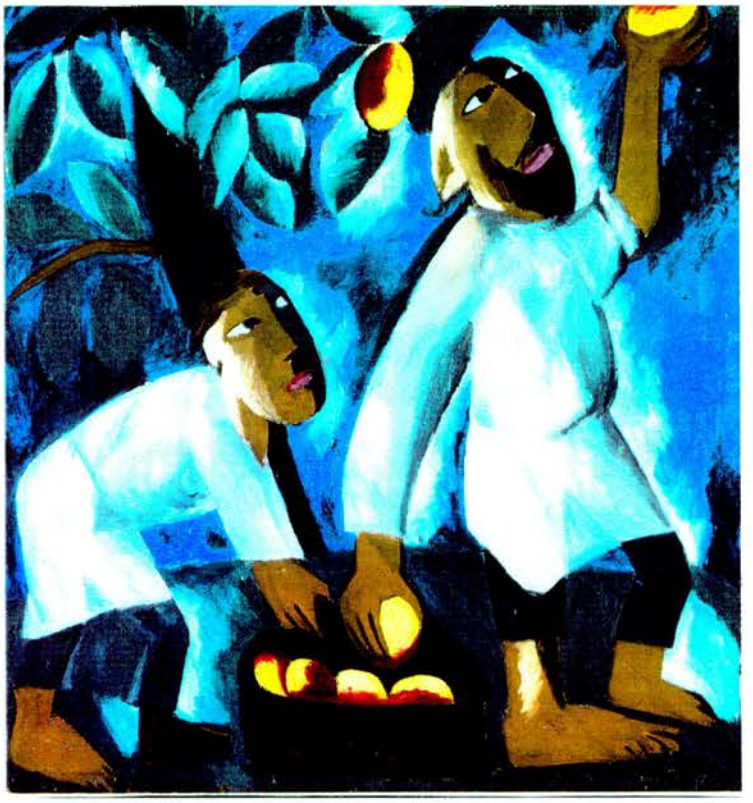


119. Natalia Goncharova, *Haymaking*, 1910

120 a–d. Natalia Goncharova, *The Evangelists*, 1910–11

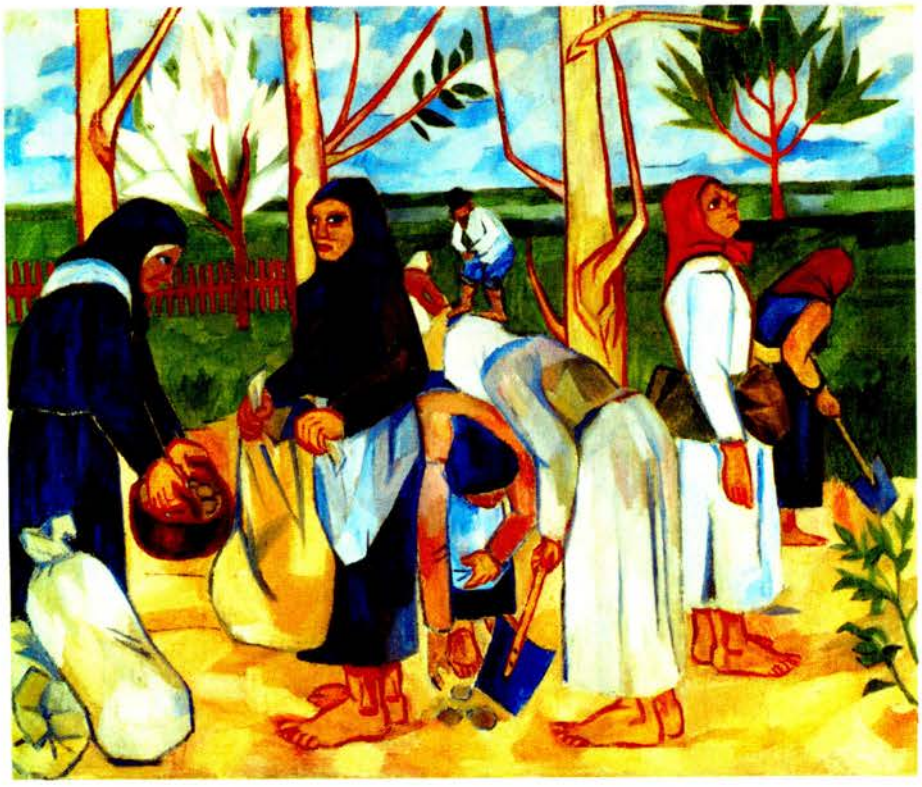


121. Natalia Goncharova, *Sheep Shearing*, 1907



122. Natalia Goncharova, *Peasants Picking Apples*, 1911

123. Kazimir Malevich, *Woman with Buckets and a Child*, 1910–11



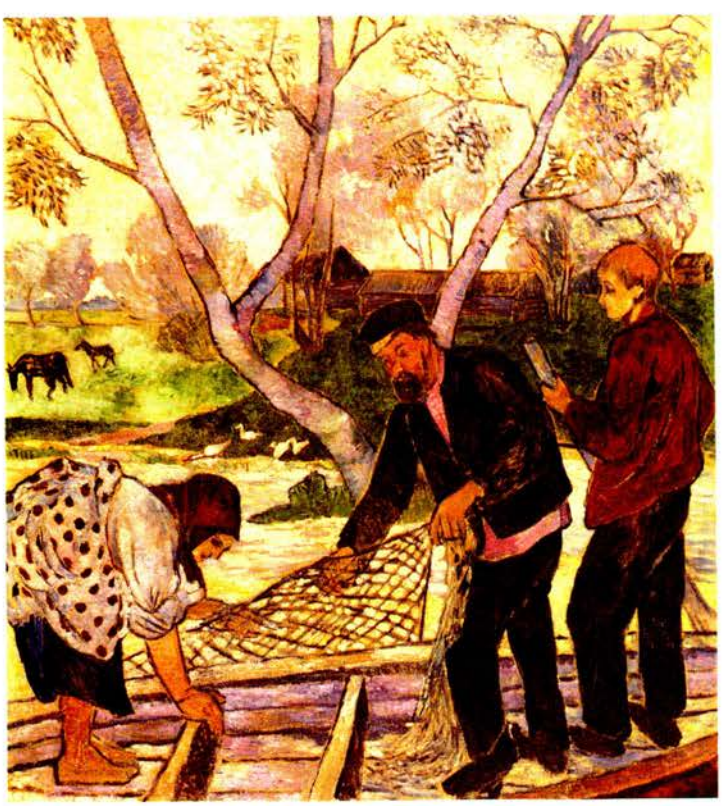
124. Natalia Goncharova, *Planting Potatoes*, 1909

125. Jean-François Millet, *The Gleaners*, 1857

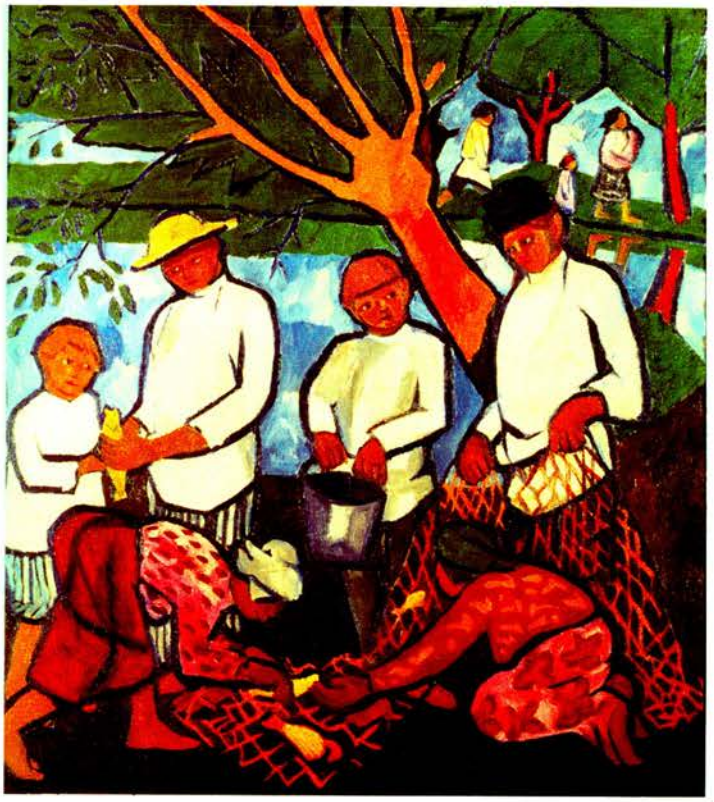
126. Natalia Goncharova, *Spring Gardening*, 1908–09

127. Natalia Goncharova, *Washing Linen*, 1910

128. Natalia Goncharova, *Drying Linen*, 1911

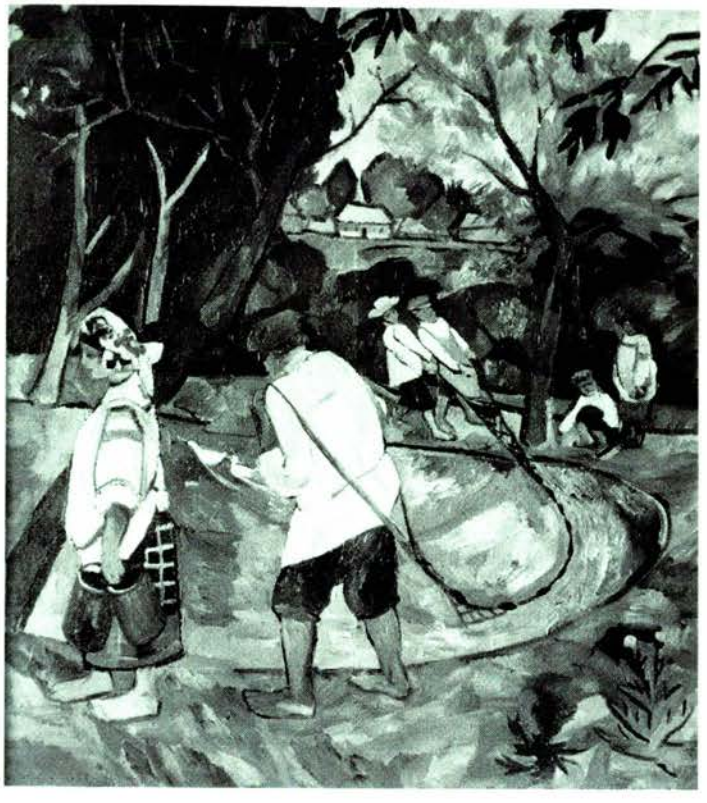


129. Natalia Goncharova, *Fishing*, 1907

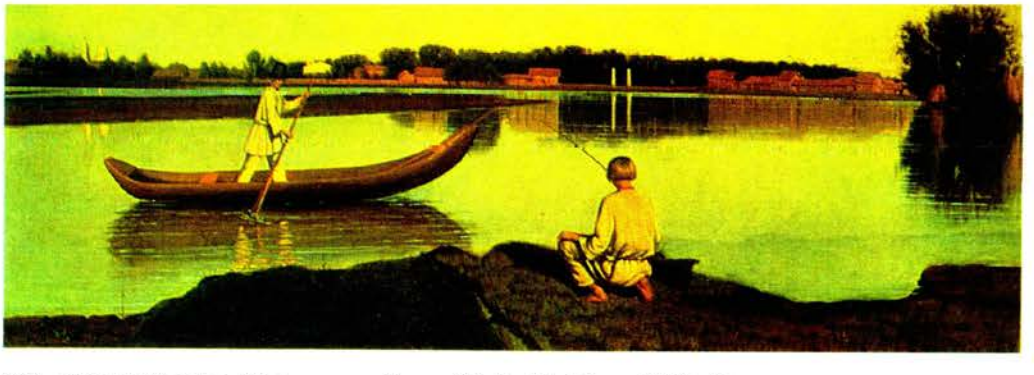


130. Natalia Goncharova, *Fishing*, 1909

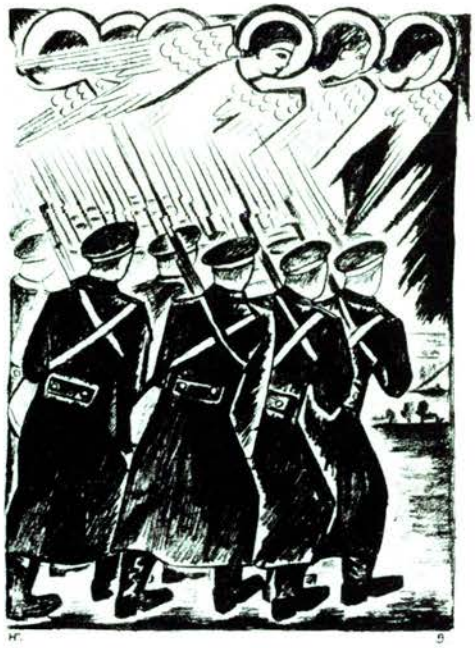
131. Natalia, Goncharova, *Pond*, *ca.* 1909



132. Natalia Goncharova, *Fishers* (*pond*), 1909



133. Grigori Soroka, *Fishermen: View of Lake Moldino*, 1843–44



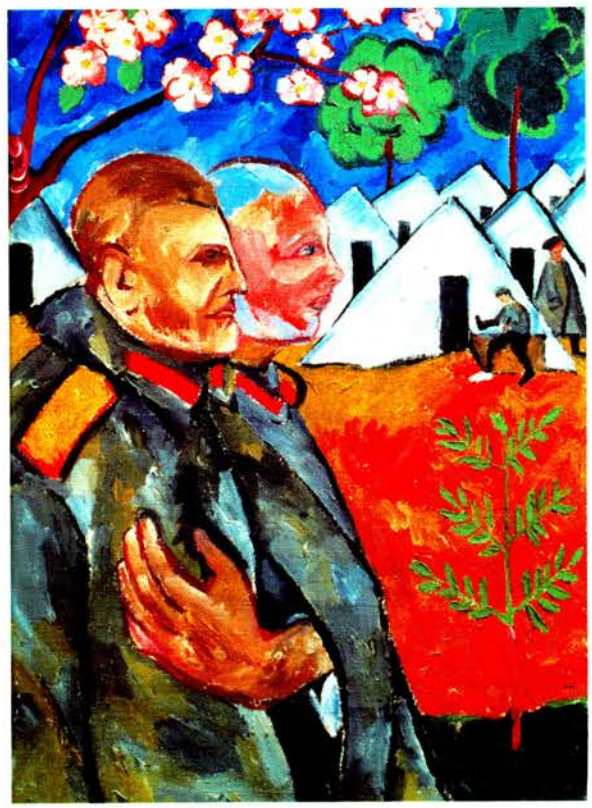
134a. Natalia Goncharova, Lithograph from *The Mystical Images of War*, published in 1914

134b. Natalia Goncharova, Lithograph from *The Mystical Images of War*, published in 1914

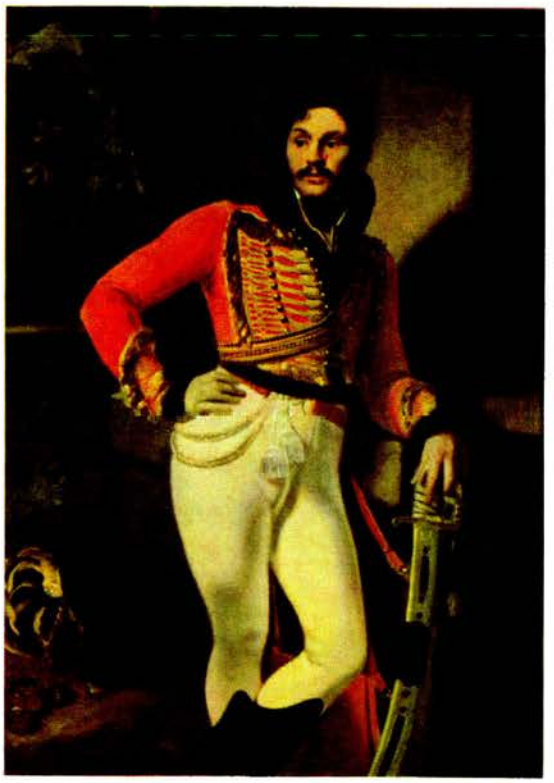
134c. Natalia Goncharova, Lithograph from *The Mystical Images of War*, published in 1914

134d. Natalia Goncharova, Lithograph from *The Mystical Images of War*, published in 1914

135. Dmitri Livitskii, *Portrait of Catherine the Great in the Temple of the Goddess of Justice, ca.* 1780

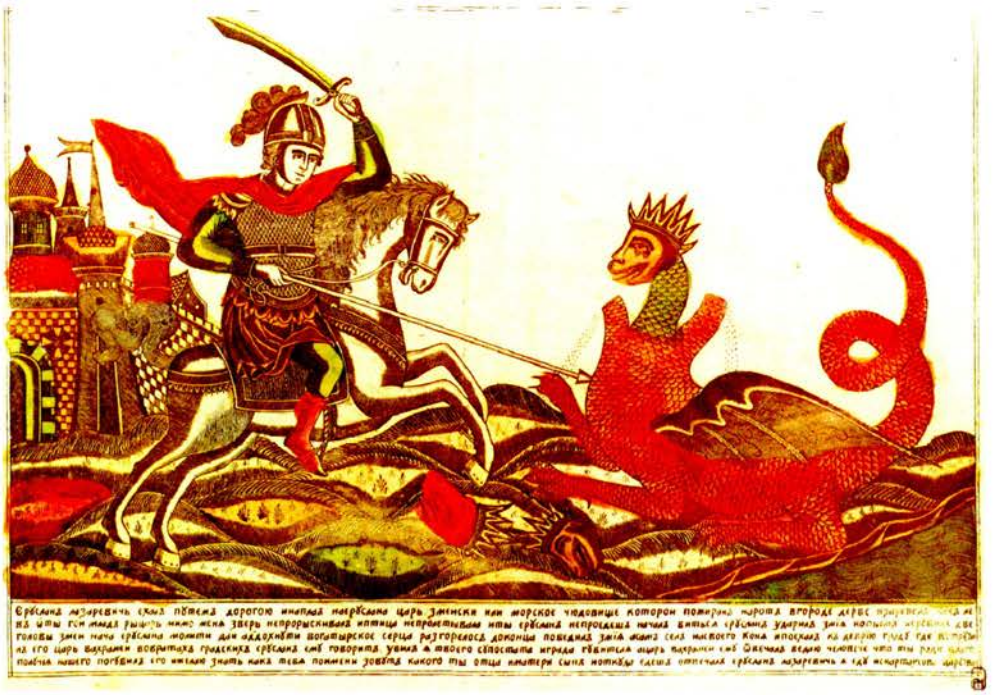


136. Natalia Goncharova, *Portrait of Larionov and His Platoon Commander*, 1911



137. Orest Kiprenskii, *Portrait of E. V. Davydov*, 1809

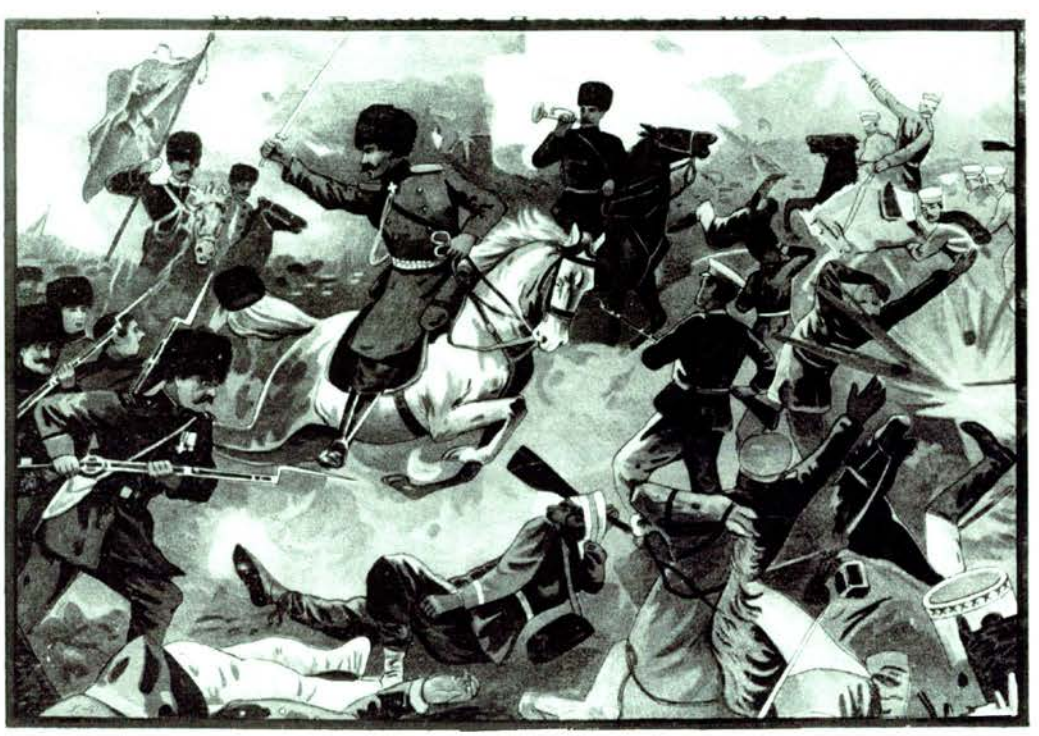
138. Auguste Desarnod, *The Battle of Bordino*, 1810s



139. Anonymous, *The Battle of Yeruslan Lazarevich with the Dragon Gorynych*, early nineteenth century

140. Anonymous, *Count Matvei Ivanovich Platov*, 1851

141. Anonymous, *The Battle of Liebstadt*, first quarter of the nineteenth century

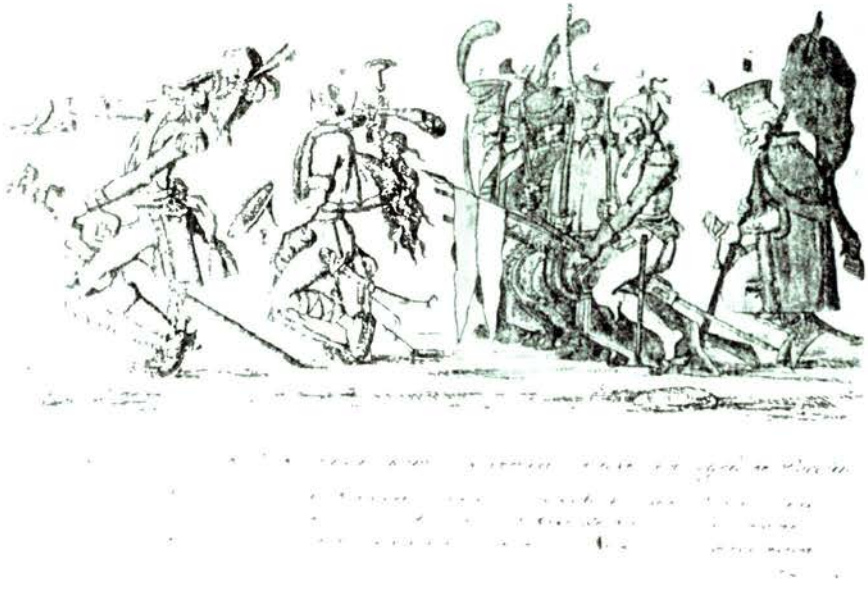


142. Anonymous, *Russia's War with Japan in 1904*, 1904

143. Anonymous, *Major General Alexander Seslavin*, 1839

144. Pavel Fedotov, *The Major's Courtship*, 1848

145. Leonid Solomatkin, *The Carol Singers*, 1872

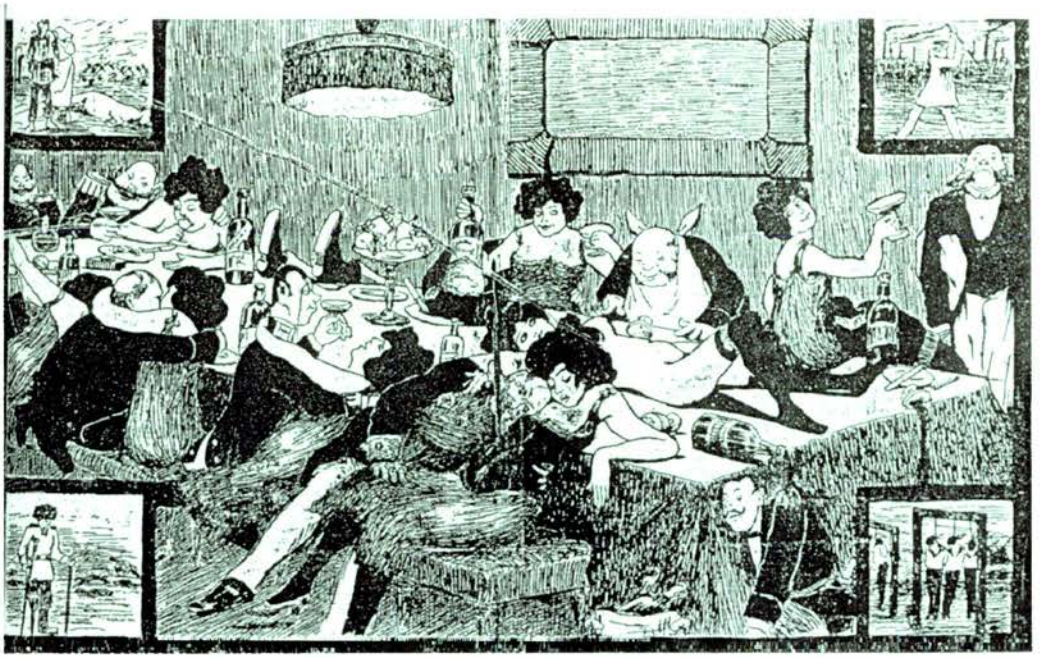


146. Ivan Terebenev, *Retreat of the French Calvary Who Ate Their Horses in Russia*, 1812

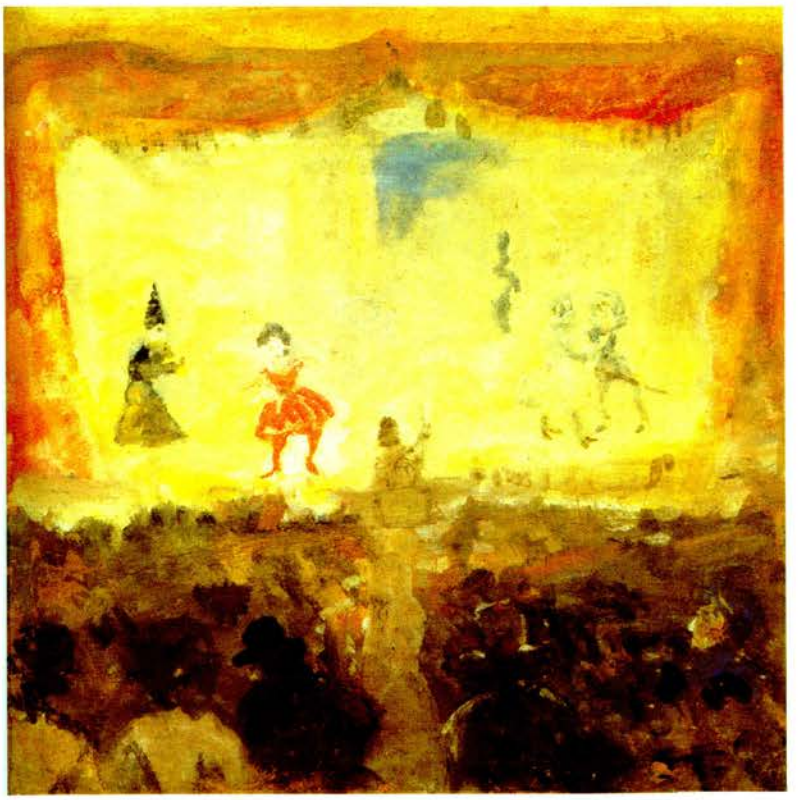
Тризна.

147. Evgenii Lancere *Funeral Feast*, 1906

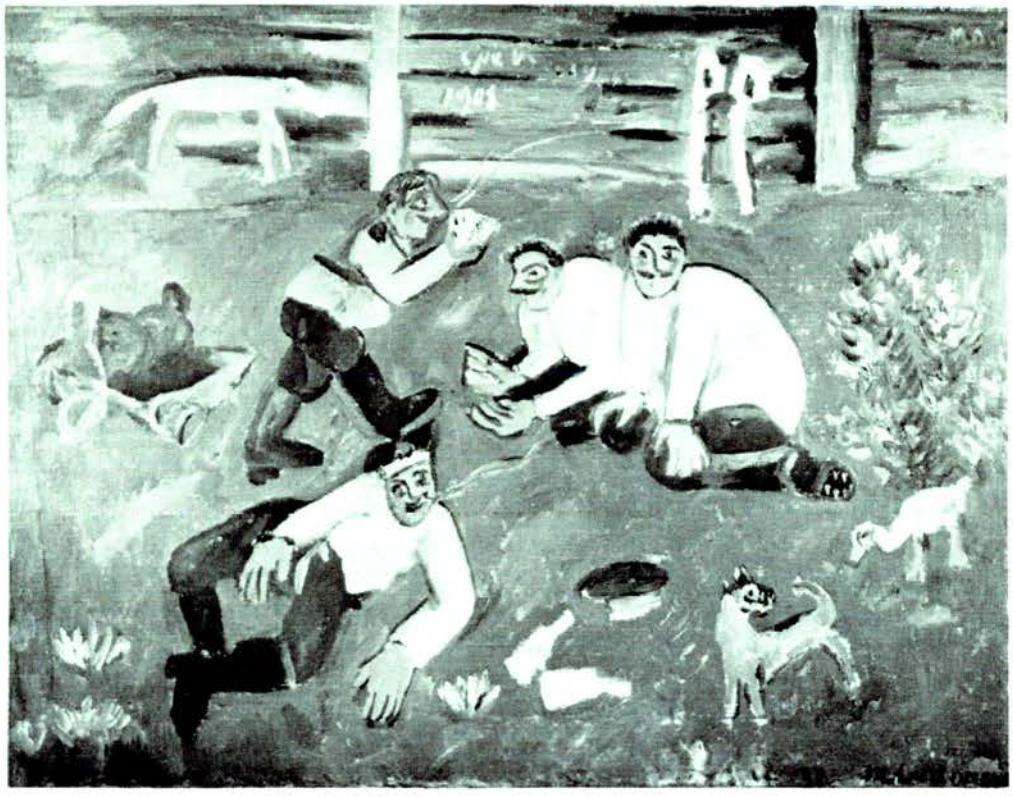
148. Anonymous, *Application to the Tsar*, *ca.* 1905–06



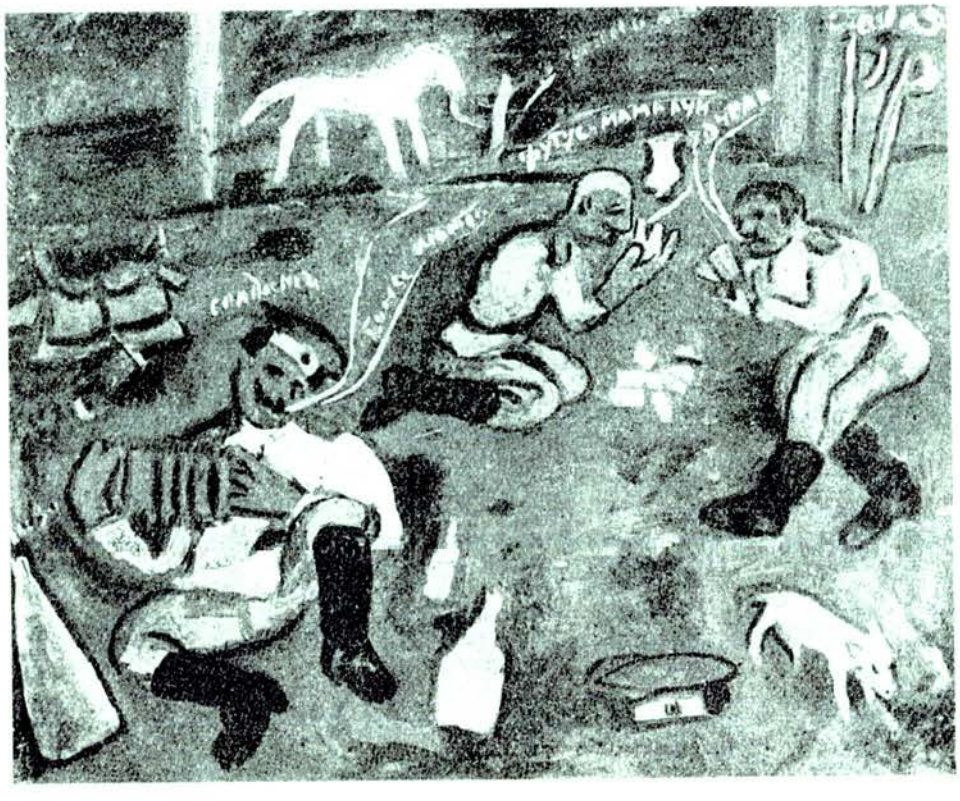
149. Anonymous, *The Ruling Class Feasts and Whores While the People Suffer and Toil*, 1906



150. Mikhail Larionov, *Puppet Theatre*, late 1890s

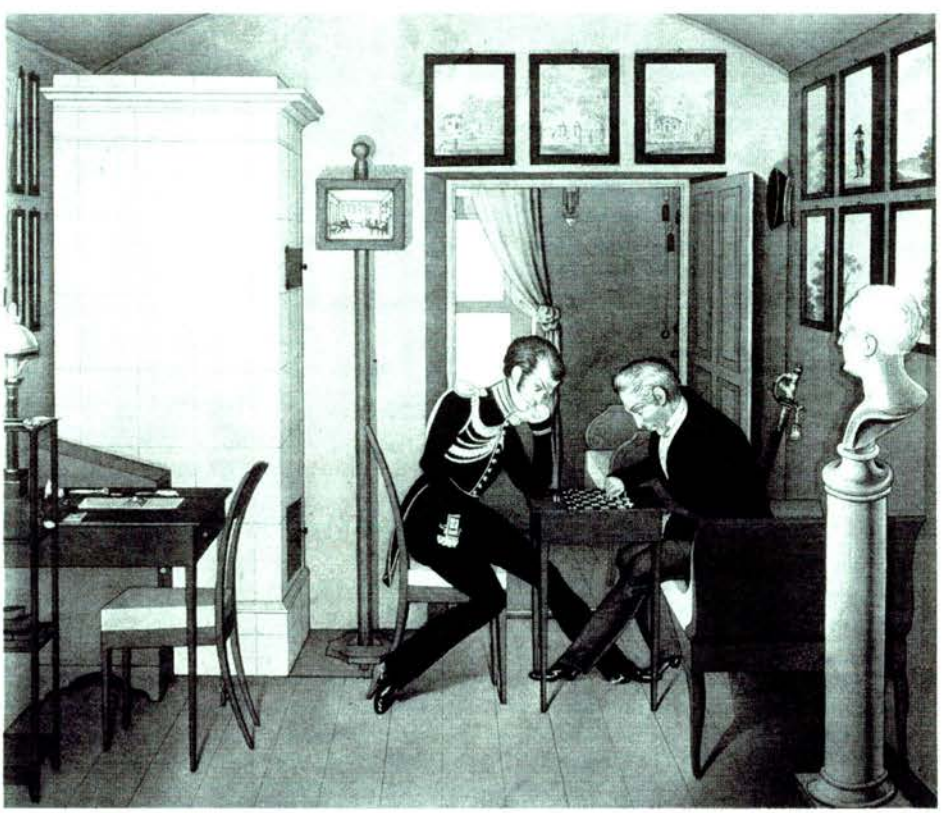


151. Mikhail Larionov, *Soldiers*, *ca.* 1910–11



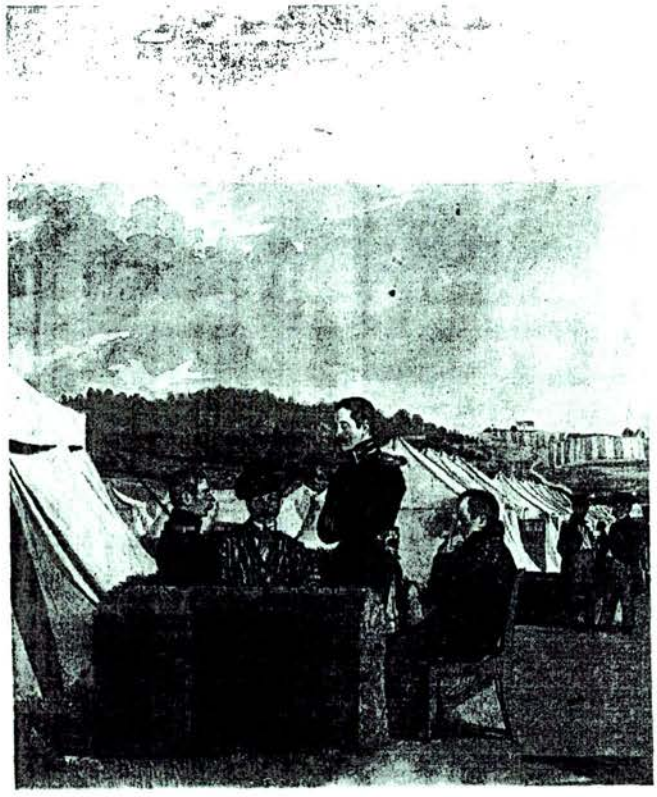
152. Mikhail Larionov, *Soldiers*, *ca.* 1911–13

153. Mikhail Larionov, *Soldiers*, post-1913



154. Anonymous, *The Reception Room of Count A. Benkendorf*, late 1820s

155. Aldolf Jebens, *A Camp Scene Near Krasnoye Selo*, 1849



156. Pavel Fedotov, *At the Camp Near the Front Line: A Group Portrait of Officers of the Findland Regiment*, 1840–41

157. Gustav Schwarz, *Unter-officers of the Life-Guard Findland Regiment with the Camp in the Background*, 1849

158. Pavel Fedotov, *The Arrival of a Palace Grenadier at his Former Company of the Finland Regiment* (sketch), 1850

159. Mikhail Larionov, *Soldiers Playing Cards*, *ca.* 1904–06

160. Mikhail Larionov, *Resting Soldier*, *ca.* 1911

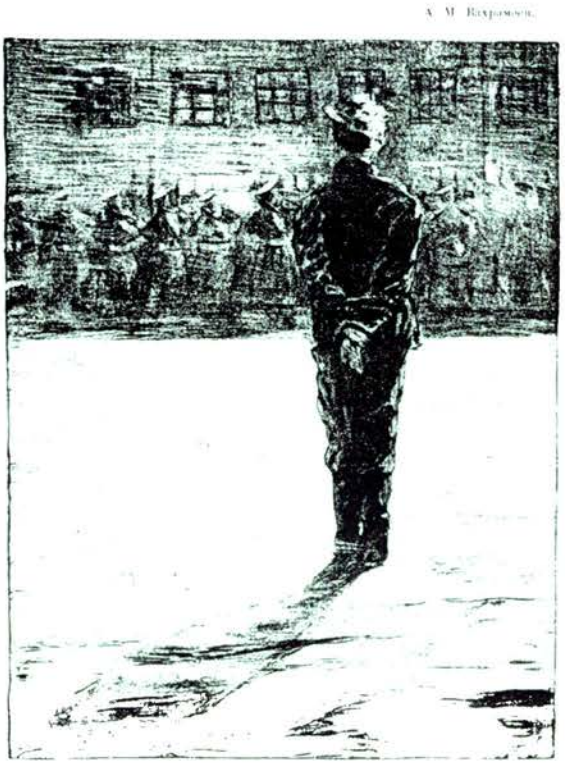
161. Pavel Fedotov, *Encore, Again Encore!*, 1851–52

162. Mikhail Larionov, *Salvo*, 1910

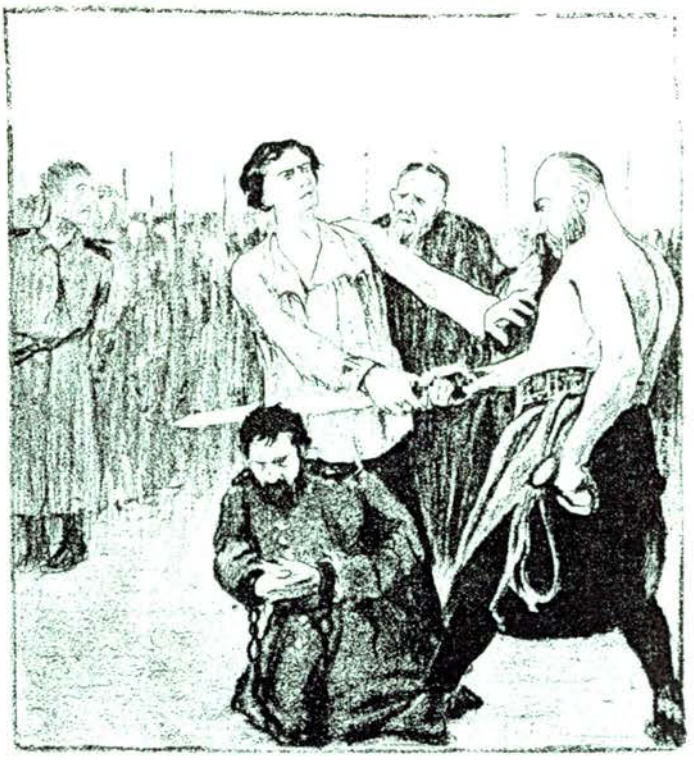
Рис. Н. Н. Троянский.

Жила на свете дура. Что ни сделает — все глупо.
Пошла дура к солдатам и скомандовала: — «Раз, два, три! Пли!»
Солдаты и запалили дуре в лоб.

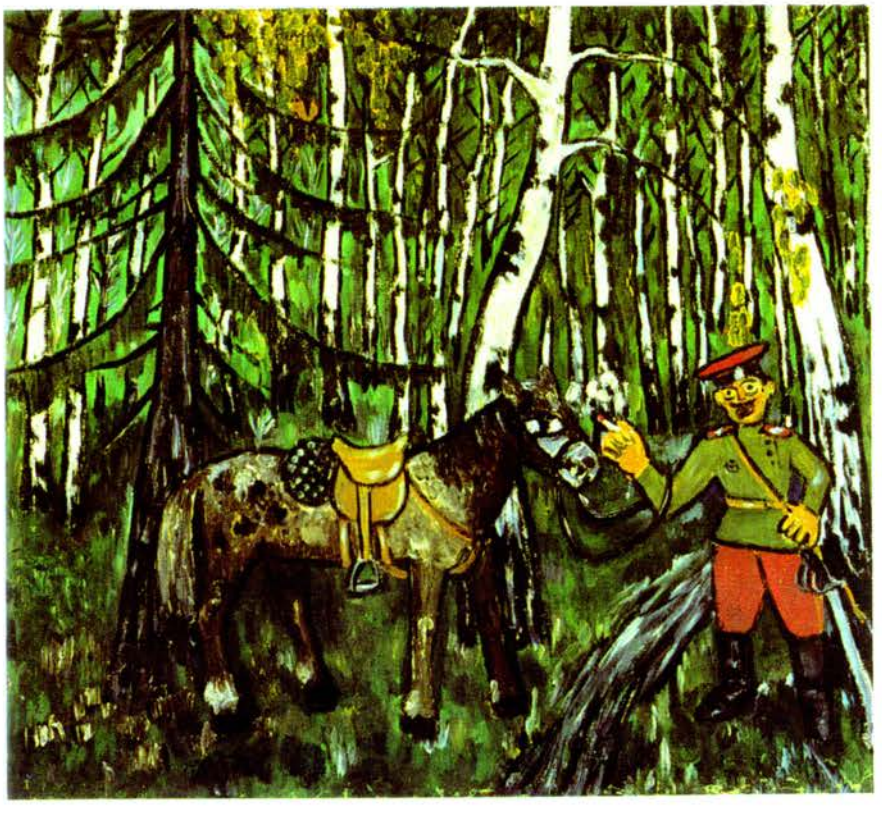
163. N.N. Troianskii, *Dura-Skazka* [*Joke-Folk Tale*], 1905



164. A.M. Vakhrameev, *Military Execution*, 1905



165. Anonymous, *Execution*, 1905

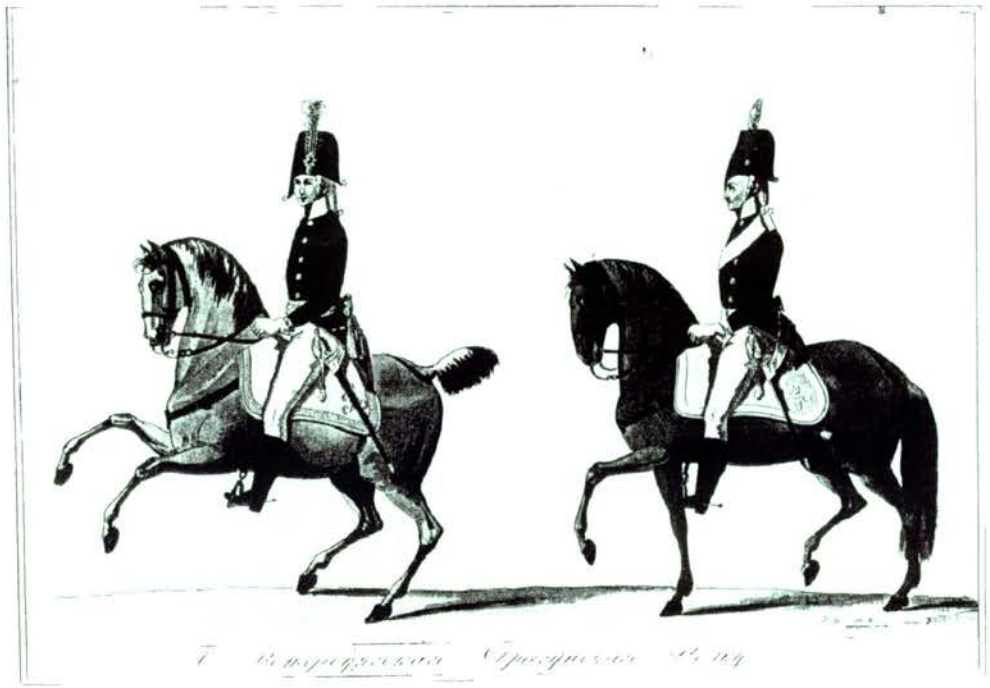


166. Mikhail Larionov, *Soldier in a Wood*, 1911

167. Mikhail Larionov, *Soldier on a Horse*, 1911

168. Anonymous, *St. George and the Dragon*,
late fourteenth century

169. Anonymous, *Calvary Captain N.A. Mailevskii of the Life-Guard Hussar Regiment*, 1860s



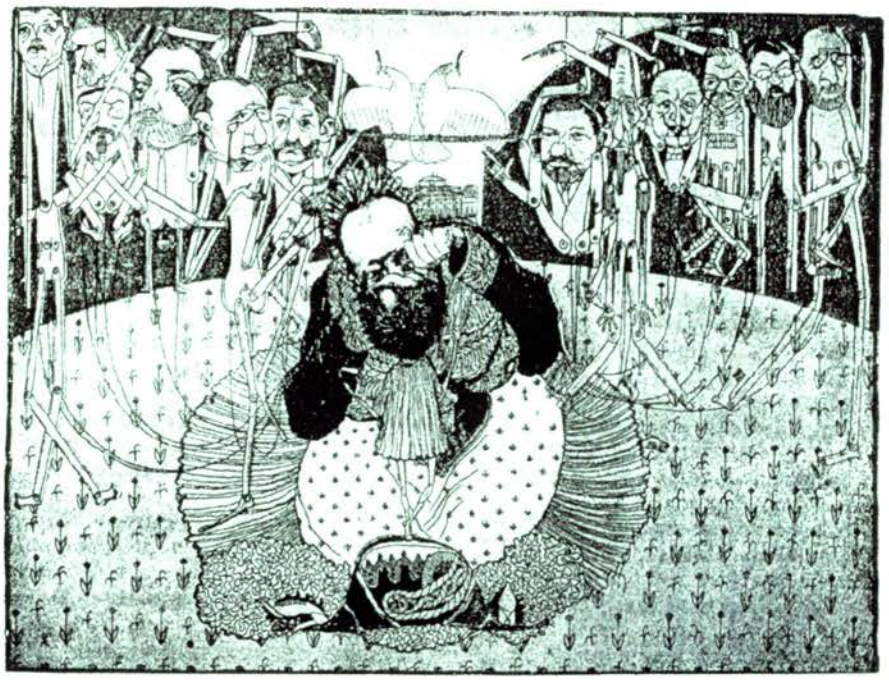
170. Anonymous, *The Officer and Private of the Saint Petersburg Dragoon Regiment*, 1802–03

171. Mikhail Larionov, *Smoking Soldier*, 1911

172. Pavel Fedotov, *Portrait of Pavel Petrovich Zhdanovich*, 1850–51

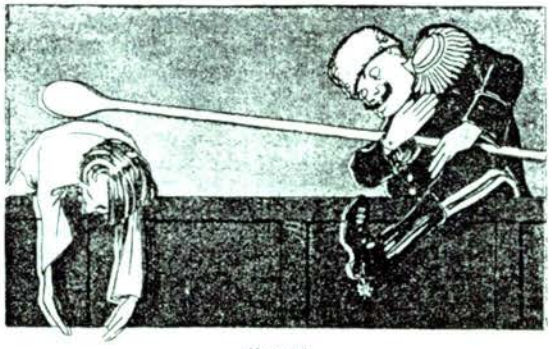
173. Paul Cézanne, *Boy in a Red Vest*, *ca.* 1888–90

174. Wooden Soldiers, Bogorodskoye region, Vladimir Province

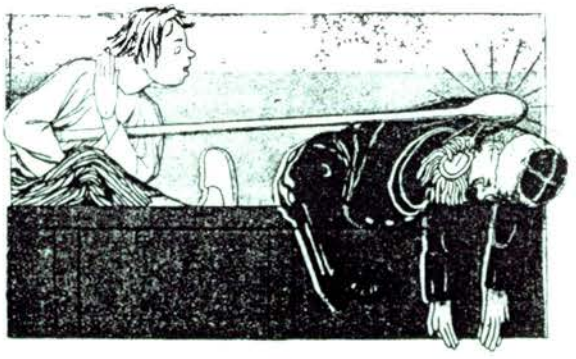


Сказка об одной мамаше и нечистоплотном мальчике.

175. Sergei Chekhonin, *The Folktale of a Mama and Her Unscrupulous Boys*, 1905



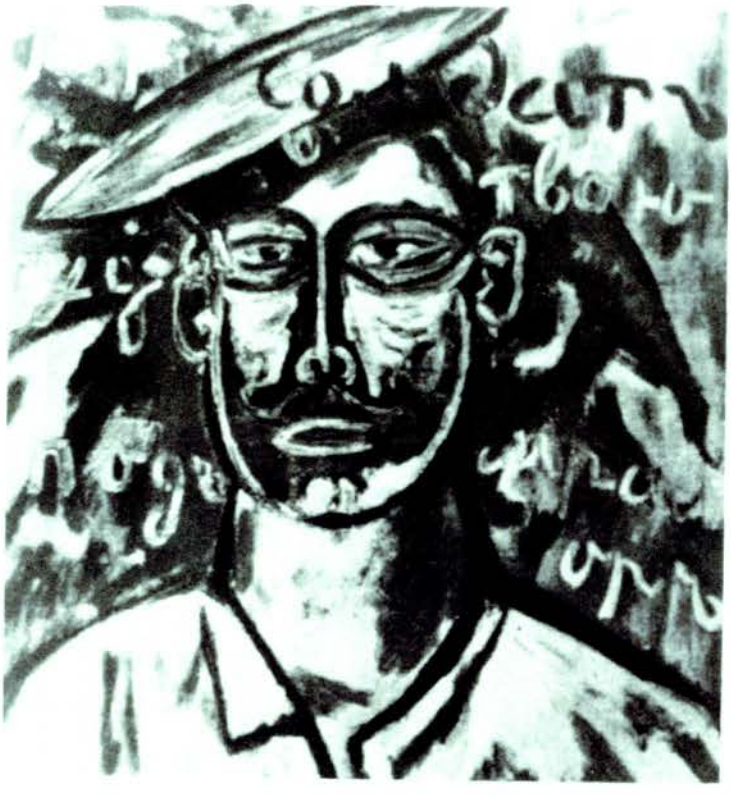
Капут!



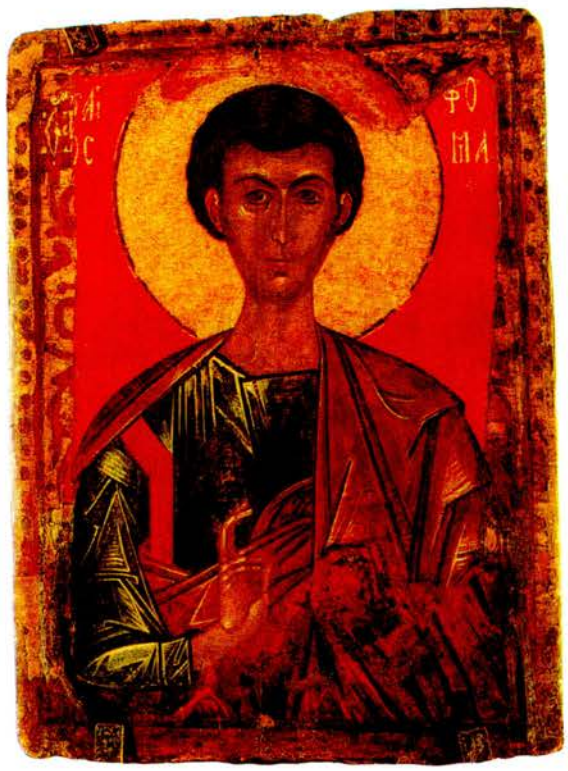
Правильно!

176. Anonymous, *The Chernigovo-Saratovskie Petrushki*, 1905

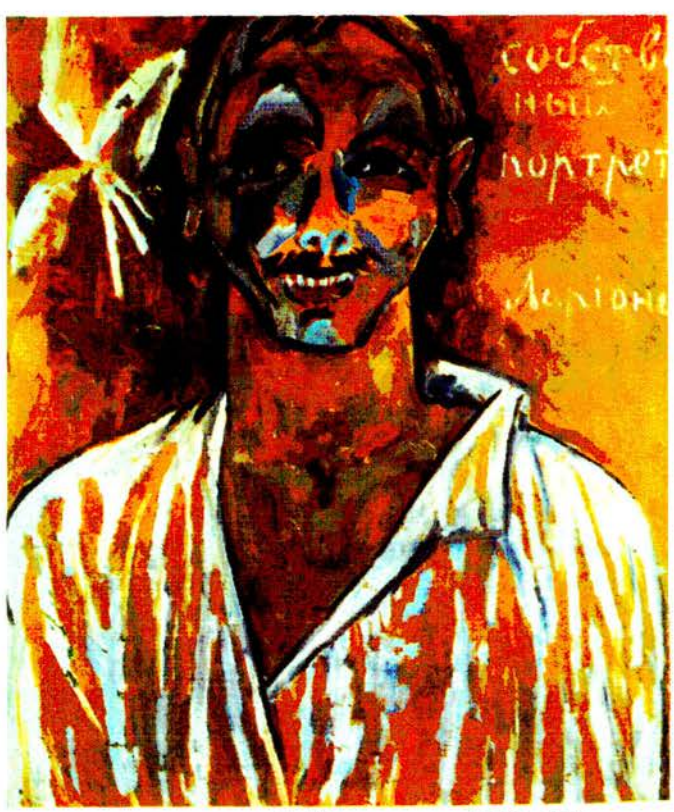
177. Ivan Terebenev, *Play Acting*, 1812



178. Mikhail Larionov, *The Head of a Soldier*, *ca.* 1911



179. Anonymous, *The Apostle Thomas*, fifteenth century



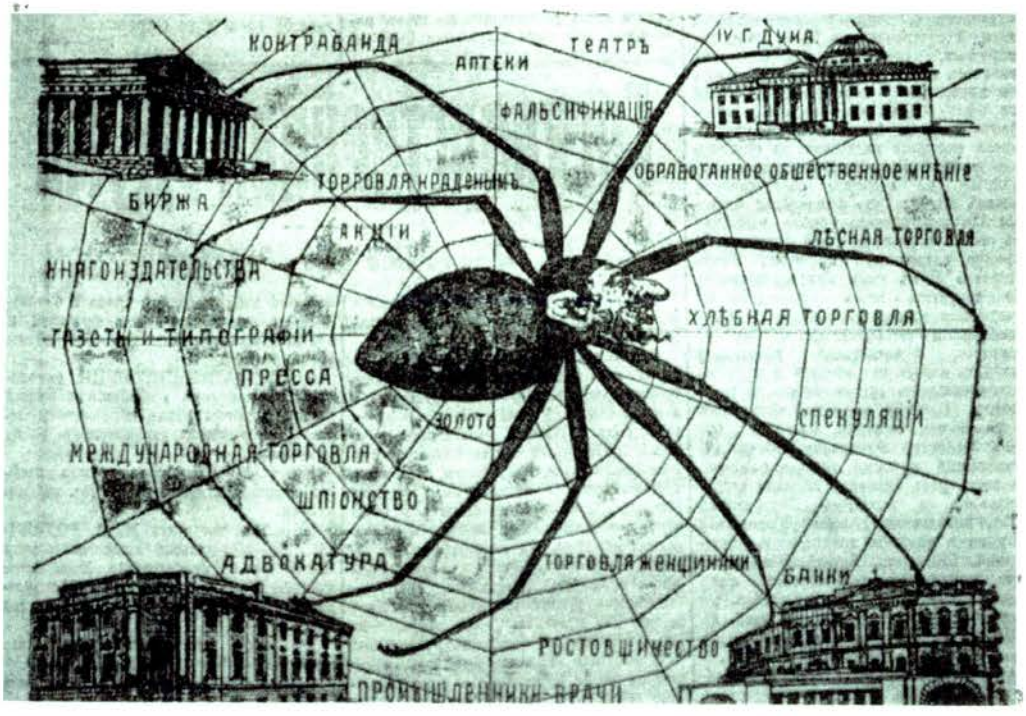
180. Mikhail Larionov, *Self Portrait*, *ca.* 1910–1912

181. Mikhail Larionov, *The Head of a Bull*, from the triptych *The Farm*, 1912

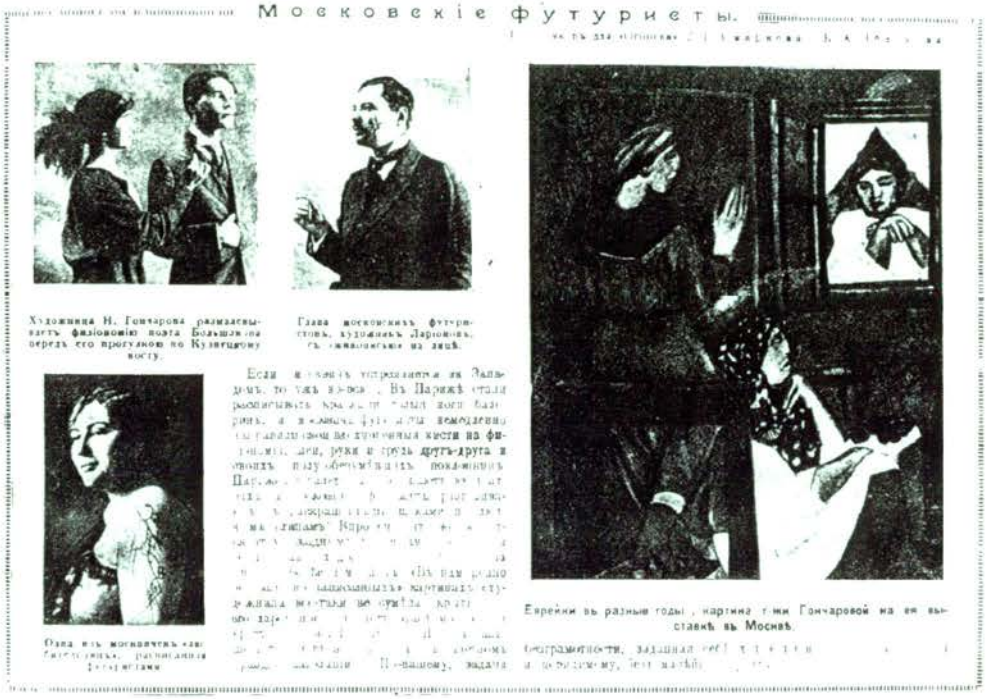
182. Novgorod School, *The Vernicle*, late twelfth–early thirteenth century

183. Natalia Goncharova, *The Jewish Family*, 1912

184. Natalia Goncharova, *Jewish Shop*, 1912

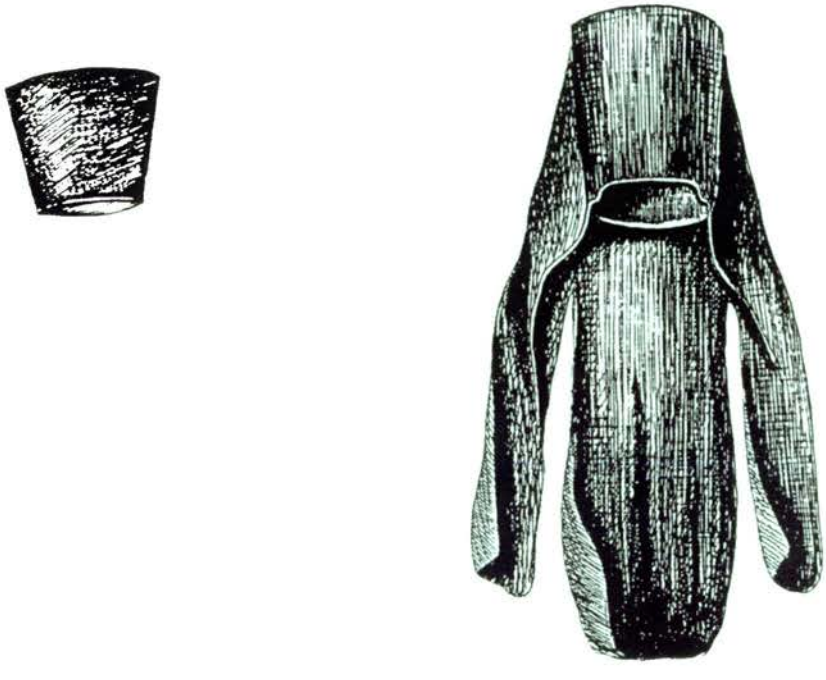


185. Anonymous, *Is Explanation Necessary?*, 1912



186. Natalia Goncharova, *Jews of Various Ages*, *ca.* 1912–1913

187. Natalia Goncharova, *Monk with a Cat*, 1912



188. Drawings of Monks' Hats

189. Carved wooden monk

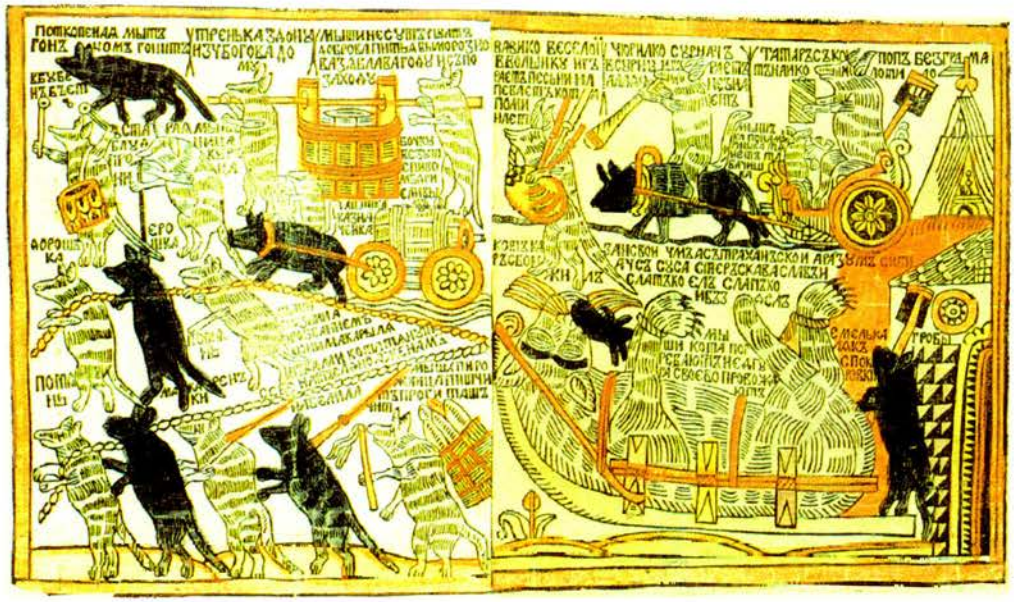
190. Yehuda Pen, *Divorce*, *ca.* 1907

191. Natalia Goncharova, *Jews: Sabbath*, 1912

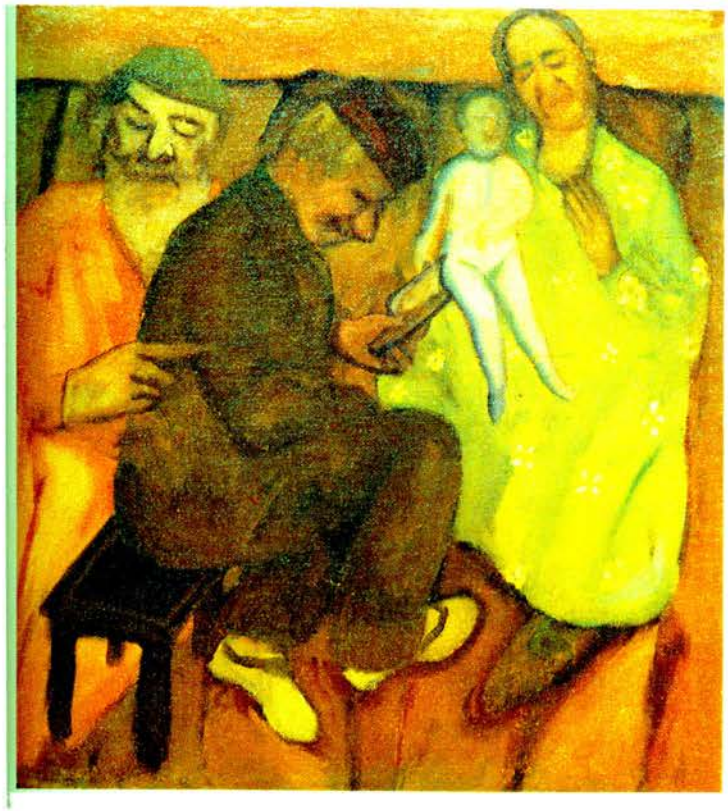
192. Anonymous, *The Fiery Ascension of the Prophet Elijah*, sixteenth century

193. Novgorod School, *John the Baptist in the Wilderness*, late fifteenth–early sixteenth centuries

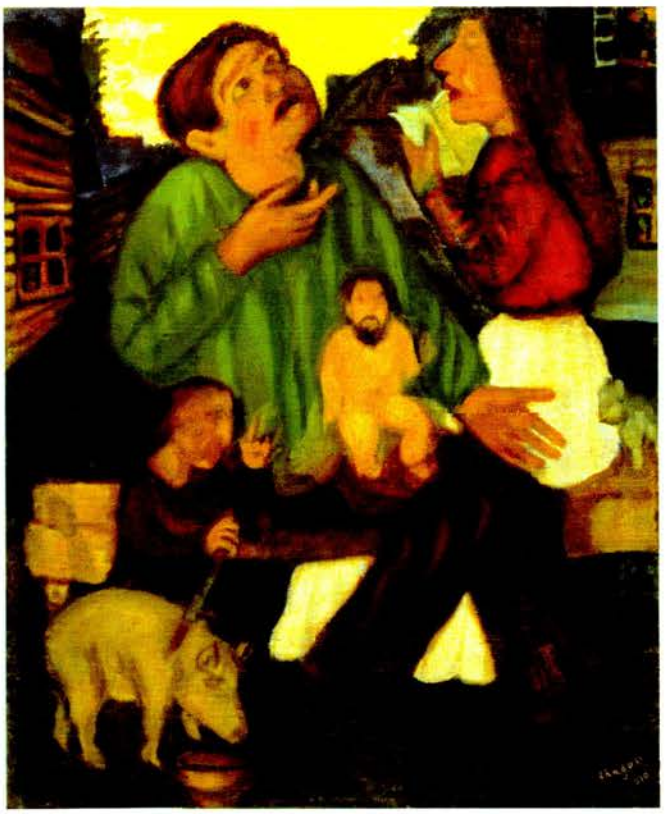
194. Jewish tombstone with hands in the act of blessing, 1832



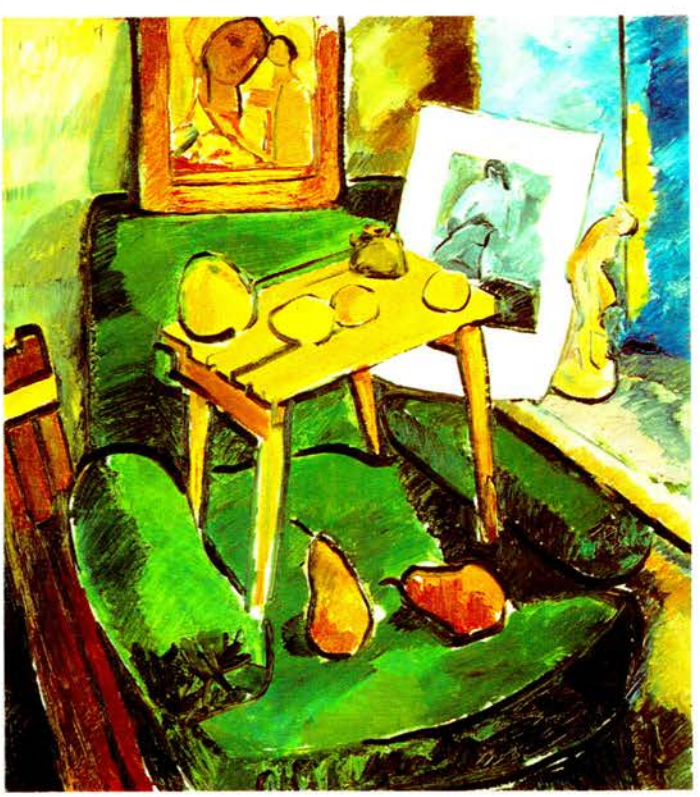
195. Anonymous, *The Mice Bury the Cat*, first half of the eighteenth century



196. Marc Chagall, *The Circumcision*, 1909



197. Marc Chagall, *The Holy Family*, 1910



198. Natalia Goncharova, *In the Studio*, 1907–08

199. Natalia Goncharova, *Elder with Seven Stars (Apocalypse)*, 1911

200. Natalia Goncharova, *Virgin with Child*, 1910

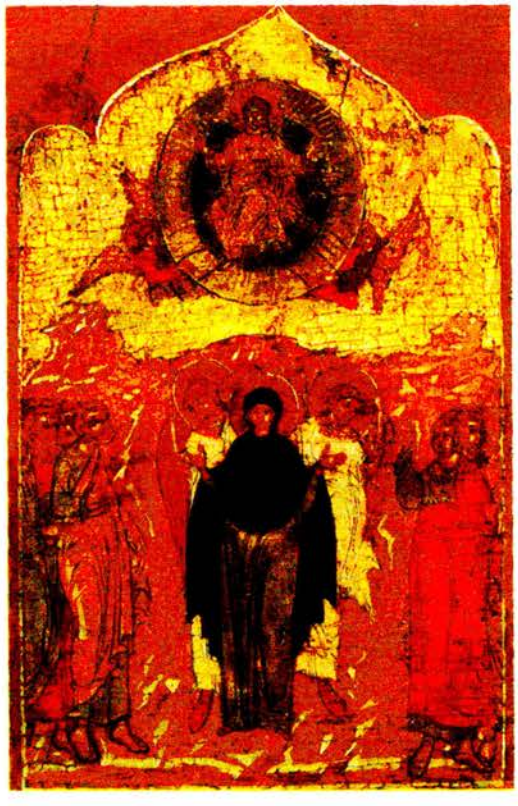
201. Natalia Goncharova, *Christ in Majesty*, 1910–11

202. Mark Antokolskii, *Ecce Homo*, 1873

203. Natalia Goncharova, *Madonna and Child, ca.* 1912–13

204. Jewish Tombstone, Vilnia-Grodno region

205. Anonymous, *The Resurrection (Christ in Limbo)*, 1820s or 1830s



206. Workshop of the Stroganov Family, *The Ascension*, early seventeenth century